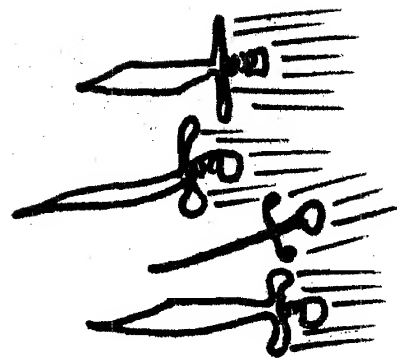
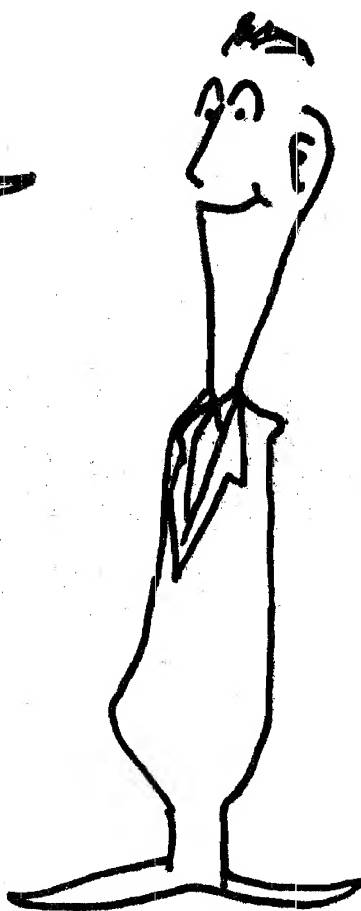
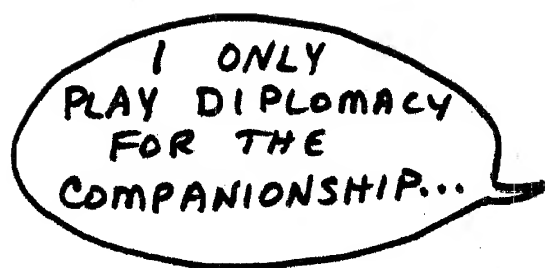


# DIPLOMACY WORLD



ISSUE 18

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WINTER 1978

# DIPLOMACY WORLD

Issue 18

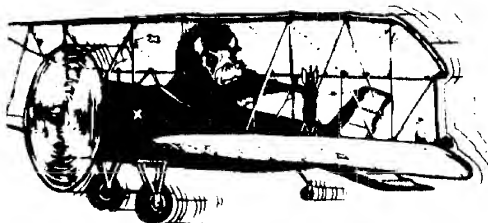
Winter 1978

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THIS WAY TO THE EGRESS....

...and if you're glued to your calendar, you probably think this issue is late. Yes. But that's intentional, and is explained elsewhere. The admittedly slightly messy process of editorial transfer is now complete; the future is bright and rosy; stay with us!

This column ended up being cut last issue, with a couple of unfortunate results. (A late-arriving ad seemed to me to take precedence, so it was substituted.) Somehow it seems the height of editorial idiocy to use the first column in an issue to identify problems and failings, but I don't believe in waffling. So here goes:

First, deadlines. Contributors were understandably at sea over the lack of a printed deadline last issue; let us remedy that by mentioning that all contributions for Issue 19 must be into the editorial offices by MAY 15, 1978. Thank you.

Then there's the little matter of the article series being written by Adam Gruen. He's back this time; in fact, he was back last time, but again the flood of material was so huge that something required postponing. Sorry, but from time to time these things are bound to happen, especially the way people seem to be writing for us lately.

And a somewhat more recent small difficulty has arisen in the editorial files. One fanzine submitted for review, which was to have been mentioned, is nowhere to be found. It's yours, Alan Moon; care to try again?

The letter column seems to have become (in one issue) a very popular feature; it is, of course, being continued. Please keep writing. Please also keep in mind, though, that space for such pages is severely limited. I estimate roughly that if I were to print all letters received this time, even casting out duplications, I would fill seventeen pages. So, of course, many letters will never see print at all (they are being read, though!), and many of the longer submissions are excerpted or heavily cut. I want to be as careful as possible in this matter; and I am inclined to believe that, if I don't make clear just what is going on, you will stop writing in such volumes and render the letter column empty. Your letters are welcomed, are always read, and when possible are acted upon. If your letter doesn't see print, it's almost always because our severe space problem is hampering your quest for fame and glory.

Hopefully, you'll keep trying, though. However: If the space below is checked, you will have to resubscribe before you may continue the quest. Your sub has expired; we sincerely hope you'll renew.

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# THROUGH THE GOOD OFFICES OF

|   |                      |
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# THE HIGH HORSE

First, a word about schedules that should have been mentioned long ago. A number of our subscribers are laboring under the misapprehension that the last couple of issues have been late. Not so - or, rather, true but intended. The new editor is trying to slowly move this magazine from Walt's old schedule to one more in line with the new editor's personal schedule. With this issue, the changeover is complete. From now on, issues will be mailed on or about June 15, Sept. 15, Dec. 15, and March 15.

New subject: Last issue, you will recall, we had another survey form. And this one went over very well; nearly one hundred responses (a few, mainly from overseas, are still coming in), which is a very gratifying and meaningful total. Thanks very much to all who participated; we're going to skip this issue, to allow time to digest the results of the last form, but be prepared for more forms in future. Meanwhile, don't forget that any and all comments of any type are most welcome.

Based on the first 85 replies received, the substantive results are as follows:

OVERALL QUALITY: On the second question (B), the totals are: Better, 41; Same, 34; Poorer, 2. No editorial staff needs much more encouragement than that!

RATING OF SINGLE ISSUE: Question C came out this way: Excellent, 17; Good, 52; Average, 15; Not good, 1; Dreadful, 0. Same comment as to previous item.

VARIANTS: Totals on item D, the amount of space you want allotted to variants: None, 13; 1-4 pages, 29; 5-6 pages, 30; 7-8 pages, 5; 8+ pages, 7. The obvious result here is that the absolute maximum most of you are willing to see is six pages, and preferably fewer. Therefore, future issues will allot a maximum of six variant pages with the proviso that they will be about the first things to be cut back or curtailed if the space in a given issue is at a premium. On this basis, I can no longer see the value of using an entire two-page center spread for a variant map, so that feature is discontinued.

I know this decision will make a few people unhappy (according to the vote, roughly a dozen); in fact, your editor happens to be a variants buff too, so the decision even makes him unhappy. But I vaguely recall making some sort of promise

to try to gear this magazine to the readers as a body, so I can't very well cram ungodly heaps of variant material in each issue in the face of a vote like that.

WOULD YOU RENEW YOUR SUB? Yes, 77. No, 5.

SUBJECT AREA RATINGS: The average ratings for each of the 11 specific subject areas mentioned in item F came out:

STRATEGY/TACTICS, 7.77; HUMOR, 7.41; VARIANT MATERIAL, 4.65; RATINGS, 4.65; HOBBY NEWS, 6.34; STATISTICS, 5.22; POLITICS, 3.27; FANZINE REVIEWS 5.71; DEMO. GAMES, 7.31; REGIONAL NEWS, 5.22; QUIZZES, 7.50.

The results rather speak for themselves, but you may be interested in some specific ideas developed from seeing these figures. For the future, hobby politics will be scrapped; rating systems will be sharply curtailed (instead of a full printout of a rating list every issue, we will have a summary (e.g. "top 100") every two or three issues, with referrals to the source of full lists); the news columns (of all types) will be kept to an essential minimum; variants we've already mentioned; and fanzine reviews will be experimented with shortly (since we've never done it, it may cause a rather different reaction once tried) and then re-evaluated.

The emphasis, therefore, will continue to be on well-written articles dealing with Diplomacy as a game and as a postal hobby. So many people have suggested more demonstration games that we plan, as soon as the current game ends, to begin two new games simultaneously, to be run on the same schedules and published and reviewed in DW. One of these games will, as usual, be games-mastered by Walt Buchanan; the other will be monitored by Richard Sharp of London, England,

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and the players will be the cream of the crop in the United Kingdom. The North American game will be commented upon by Bruce Schlickbernd (unless he's changed his mind), while the U.K. game will see Richard Sharp writing as well as adjudicating.

And now seems about the time to comment on our policies for contributions to this magazine. We always welcome articles, letters, cartoons (either drawn yourself - max. width 4", max. height 6" - or described so that the art director can work with it), ideas...you name it! If you want your contribution returned in case it isn't used (and I must warn you, there are things we don't use), please include a stamped return envelope (outside U.S.A., the stamps are on us).

Beginning this issue, a new feature (which will definitely improve as we go; this issue's first effort is, we concede, a hastily-contrived space filler) - a regular column aimed at postal Diplomacy newcomers, to try to help them sort out some sense from the miasma of technicality that too often infests these pages. Too many comments came in with those reply forms on the order of "I don't understand what I'm reading; please explain." Thus the newcomers' column. Your kindly editor, in his first actual bit of work for the magazine he produces, will write the thing. Subjects to be discussed? Well, dear readers, that's your problem; you tell me what you're at sea about, and I'll do my best (or get a guest columnist who has some answers to stand in for me).

Art editor Liz Danforth is temporarily on leave; we wish her a speedy recovery and hope for a rapid return to duty. This issue's cover is a composite developed by Rod Walker from two old WILD 'N' WOOLY covers, dating from 1968. It isn't Liz, but it will have to do; nobody else on the staff can draw!

## DO YOURS HANG LIMP?

by MIKE AGNEW and CAL WHITE

((EDITOR'S NOTE: The following short item, reprinted from Cal White's fanzine "Janus," issue 12, is the sequel to last issue's "Do Yours Stand Erect?"))


Cal and I were outraged at the subtle accusations that were in evidence in Gross' article ((see DIPLOMACY WORLD 17)), and I haven't cooled down enough to put a finger to typewriter until now. (My foot! I'm still the one who has to type this thing! - Cal)

Our first game of Dippy was at the house of a friend (?), Fred Meredith. Cal and I had been told of this "far-out game of international intrigue and suspense." How disappointed we were to find a stupid geographic mapboard of Europe with dumb little pieces of coloured wood on it. However, when the game was well under way, all the novices present, including James Fenimore Whyte, of JANUS fame, fell in love with Diplomacy (except Cal, who was peeved at being ganged up on and wiped out - but Cal admitted the game had possibilities). It was here that we picked up the habit of standing our armies erect. Thus, the erect posture of our army units was an acquired trait, not natural as in the case (mental?) of Gross and Dunsmuir. Imagine our shock when we were confronted by this dynamic duo, who had always played with theirs limp!

As Gross says, there is a subconscious rationale behind the positioning of army units, but his analysis is inane, incongruous, and just plain gross! All that stuff about "balance" of armies and stamina and fortitude is just so much buffalo chips. The real reason Gross started positioning his army units horizontally is that he is an uncoordinated schlemiel, who keeps bumping into the table the board is on, knocking the pieces into disarray. By arranging the units horizontally, he increases the frictional contact between board and armies, thus stopping the units from wandering too far from their positions.

As for inferior players being the ones who place their army units erect, statistics show that this statement is a fallacy. In Gross' FTF games, erect units are in civil disorder. Can't we remember which country is in anarchy and which isn't? It is obvious that the positioning of army units in a prone position is a tell-tale sign of incompetence, mental ineptitude and grossness.

While Gross suggested humouring people who position their army units erect, we who stand proud and erect (?) suggest genocide for those who dissent. Intelligent comments welcome.




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# BREAKING THE ICE

by  
DOUGLAS  
MILLS

The way of a debutante isn't easy. However facile it may appear, an incredible amount of blood, sweat and tears goes into the formation of a games club and the launching of a new 'zine. Even the enthusiastic members and subscribers of the latest arrival on the hobby scene are unlikely to be fully aware of the many hours of effort and organisation that have to take place before a club or 'zine can become functional and efficient. Because of this I would like to relate the trials and tribulations of setting up a club and Dippy/games 'zine, respectively known as: The International Wargames Group; and Aide de Camp.

Seven years ago, at the tender age of thirteen, I moved from North Wales (U.K.) to Brussels, Belgium, with my family. At that time I was not even aware of the existence of Diplomacy/Wargaming anywhere in the world, let alone Belgium! However, this miserable state of affairs changed in January 1974 when I was introduced to miniatures by a couple of school friends. This was quickly followed by attendance at The Second Annual Continental European Wargaming Convention, Brussels, 3-5/V/1974, organised by John Mansfield and Michel Liesnard. It was here that I first became aware of Board and Skirmish (Role-Playing) wargaming, and saw my first face-to-face Diplomacy game in action. I also made contact with David Wallace and Chris Robinson, two student wargamers, to the previous existence of whom I had been completely oblivious, despite the fact that they attended the same school as I in Belgium. I was now hooked!

During the following year I wargamed during every available moment of spare time. I painted 25mm Napoleonics, played SPI, and together with Chris and David worked on our own set of WWII 54mm Skirmish Rules (God, they were bad!). In May 1975 the three of us, together with three other student friends, attended The Second Annual Continental European Conflict-Simulation Games Convention (held in the now-defunct Lendi Hotel, Brussels), organised by Michel Liesnard. We presented a display of our 54mm Rules and received some minor flak. But except for Michel's kind interest, we were very much ignored. This lack of interest frustrated and dismayed me at the time, especially since with youth's enthusiasm we had spent hundreds of hours grinding away on the blasted rules. It was during this period that Chris and I first had the notion of forming

a club. If we couldn't get support from elsewhere, then we'd damn well survive on our own.

So it came to pass in November 1975 that The Anglo-Belgian Wargames Group was born, with six founder members, all British students living in Belgium. There then followed a 'honeymoon' period of some six months during which the A.B.W.G. was completely involved and satisfied with its own internal activities. Gradually, however, Chris and I became aware that if the Group continued to operate in this fashion, it wasn't going to survive very long. True, we had grown by five or six members, but contrary to our aspirations the average age of our membership was dropping. We were still a student organisation, and British to the core. This situation couldn't last. The international community in Brussels is fairly fluid, and a family seldom stays in Belgium for more than three years. At this rate the Group would soon be losing members as quickly as it gained them. We had to attract members of Belgian nationality. I attempted to do this by asking various local publications to inform their readership of our existence, but except for an English-language magazine printed locally in Brussels, they ignored our requests: Most certainly because we were students, and because they felt we would be amateurish in our attitudes and organisation. Also, I must confess that at this time I was not sensitive to the general Belgian antagonism to the words 'war' and 'wargaming' - which hostility is not surprising considering Belgium's history during the past century - plus the fact that Belgians are not really club-cravers, probably because of the high population density resulting in a certain reserved European attitude towards life and a respect for other people's privacy.

Anyway, our first bit of publicity rewarded us with one more member in the form of an American student. Gradually he got some of his friends from the two American schools here in Brussels to join, until we had sixteen members, half of whom were American. Unfortunately we still hadn't solved our two major problems: raising the average age, and attracting other nationalities.

At the beginning of 1976 we decided that the only way to get more Belgians to join the Group was to hold an "Open Meeting" which the general public could attend (up until recently we have held the meetings at the homes of our members, so normally there wasn't much space left for outsiders). We fixed the date of our "Open-Day" as during May and sent out our publicity. The same English magazine responded with an announcement and I succeeded, with the aid of the Military Modelling clubs directory, in contacting the two other wargames concerns in Belgium, both of which were mainly composed of students. I must also add that I wrote to certain well-known fanzine editors, who, for diplomatic (pun) reasons I shan't mention by

name, didn't even have the courtesy to acknowledge my letters, let alone advertise us. I find this one of the ironic aspects of the postal Diplomacy hobby. Diplomacy is a social game requiring contact between players and the GM/'zine publisher, yet when it comes to establishing contacts outside of their own little circle, many publishers seem loath to do so.

At that time we felt that our "Open-Day" was a success, as we had some thirty attendees from outside the Group. We made reasonable contact with the two other Belgian clubs and gained another young American member. However, our real triumph was shortly afterwards, when M. Charles Turquin, a reporter from Fourquoi Pas?, an influential French-language Belgian weekly magazine, 'phoned up and asked for an interview, as he was preparing a major article about the wargaming hobby. The ice was broken. Charles became so enthusiastic that he immediately joined the group, and his article, which was published in two installments, ran to some twelve pages in length. That was the turning point for the Group. The Walloon readership in Belgium had been successfully approached, and little by little our French-speaking members increased in number, and the average age of our members started to rise. We were pleased too because we felt that we were partly responsible for the first major publicity of the hobby in Belgium.

Durring the latter part of 1976 one of the members introduced the Group, and myself, to Diplomacy, and over the next few months its popularity caught on. I became increasingly aware of the value of Diplomacy as one of the Group's major assets: not only was it easy to teach (a great help when one has to explain in a foreign language) and suitable for large social Group gatherings, but it also had postal possibilities. This was exactly the sort of game I had been looking for ever since the first of our members had left Belgium to move back to England. It now meant that a member could still play and have contact with the Group without having to attend meetings. From Christmas 1976 to May 1977 I searched around for every fanzine I could lay my hands on, so as to get some idea of standard 'zine format and jargon. Attending a convention organised in Brussels by the Belgian Gettysburg Conflict-Simulation Club in April 1977, I met Michel Liesnard, who was selling a selection of Belgian and other well-known Dippy variants. It was here that I first saw the possibilities of the Dippy variant and it put paid to my previous misconceptions about the limitations of the classical game. I immediately decided to go ahead with the idea of publishing a monthly news/Dippy 'zine as one of the services to Group members. At the same time, the Executive Committee decided that it was time for an overall blitz of the organisation and running of the Group. We concluded that it

was high time we changed the name of the Group, as the "Anglo-Belgian Wargames Group" was perfectly ludicrous considering that over half our members were either Belgian or American. Also, due to movement of members, we now had people situated in several countries all over the world. We felt that The International Wargames Group was a fitting title. We kept the word Group because it sounded less official and helped to emphasize the informal and social aspect. Someone suggested that we use "Conflict-Simulations" instead of "Wargames" so as to be less offensive to the Belgian viewpoint, but it was felt that this was really dodging the issue. Anybody who attended our meetings could plainly see that we weren't a bunch of anarchists or warmongers any more than the guy round the corner who's nuts over military figurines!

Finally, in conjunction with the start of our new 'zine, Aide de Camp, we decided that if the Gettysburg Co-Sim Club were capable of organising a full-fledged convention for two days (at which our members were very much a prominent feature), so were we. It was obvious to me, however, that the majority of hobbyists in Europe would still consider us a "kids' club" and sneer at the idea of us suggesting a Con., let alone organising one. Also, not knowing the reasoning behind the change of name, they would write the whole thing off as mere daydreaming on our part. (Even Roland Prevot was skeptical about our new name in Vortigern.) I realised that to achieve the same amount of success as any other ordinary adult (!?) club, we were going to have to put in twice as much effort to have a normal success...so I settled down to type 93 personal letters (not photocopy handouts) to various publications, clubs, groups and well-known European wargamers. I must admit that the organisation of the Con. turned into a type of Diplomacy; I knew that as the Group had no reputation as yet, I would have to play one publication, club, hobbyist off against another in order to get a response (con them, so to speak!). The local English-language magazine which supported us all the way through our short history turned up trumps again by writing a full column of information about us. This I immediately circulated around other publications and radio networks advising them to get in on the scoop! Strangely enough, my strategy worked, and we ended up being advertised by the national daily, Le Soir; having notices placed in Pourquoi Pas?, the American Forces European publication Stars and Stripes, plus Military Modelling and Battle (to name a few); and being interviewed for substantial lengths of time on the American Forces Network Europe-wide, and Radio-Television Belge nationwide.

I then had to plan how I wanted the Con., Wargame-Weekend '77, to operate. I didn't want to limit it to any one particular group of people in the hobby - there are so few of us here in

visited Europe every year and I had to go for all notes of reference like Diplomat, Belgium and publishers. Also, I wanted the event to be interesting to the layman, so that he could understand what was going on and be involved. Finally, I arranged for an interesting array of trade stands to be present, supplying reference books; American, British, Belgian and French games; and figurines suitable for wargaming and collecting. I felt that trade stands were an integral aspect of a Con., especially since hobby materials are still reasonably difficult to obtain, and quite pricey, in Belgium.

Anyway, it all paid off. The "Weekend" was a roaring success, both socially and hobby-wise, with over 150 attendees from all over Belgium and Europe - quite a sizeable achievement for our neck of the woods. And some notable characters and associations turned up, including DIPLOMACY WORLD's own pet shark! ((Edi Birsan)) In all, we added some twenty members to our lists and Diplomacy in Belgium appears to have a rosy future.

-----  
DEVIL'S ADVOCATE'S NOTE: When Douglas states that we Belgians are not "club-cravers," he is wrong - at least partially. In fact, the number of so-called "organizations," "leagues," "associations," and even "clubs" is probably higher here than anywhere else. The omnipresent "cafes" (8000 in Brussels alone, for one million inhabitants!), which are seldom more than meeting-places for people who share a common interest, like pigeon-fanciers, soccer supporters, musicians, philanthropists or crossbowmen, reflect this situation well. It has been said that each Belgian has a good chance to become the President of something once in his life at least, which is well done to please what Keyserling used to call our "taste for coloured pomp and ostentation" (SPECTRAL ANALYSIS OF EUROPE - The Low Countries).

On the other hand, the Belgians are often very reluctant to join an association they have not contributed to set up, half because they are always afraid of being morally or financially swindled in a country the inhabitants of which call themselves "smugglers" (smokkeleirs), half because they realize it will be much harder to play a prominent role in it. The overimportance granted to "Founding Members' decisions" in most Belgian statutes is the evidence of this.

- Michel Liesnard

---

((Douglas Mills has quite adequately introduced himself in his article. The appended note is from Michel Liesnard, whose range of activities in wargaming and science-fiction fandom would require the rest of the magazine to list. He is the publisher of Gettysnews, a frequent, French-language journal devoted mainly to the development and play of Diplomacy variants.))

## corner

### HOW TO FIND A POSTAL DIPLOMACY GAME

You're reading DIPLOMACY WORLD; it follows, therefore, that you must have some sort of an interest in playing Diplomacy by mail. If you are already so playing, you don't really need to read this column (though you may if you wish); if not, why not? If it's because you've had some trouble finding an open game, or haven't quite figured out how to go looking for that game, then you've come to the right page.

Let's begin by a concession: The "NEED A GAME" column which appears in every issue of DW is, at best, a stopgap. The way this magazine is produced, there is just no way to keep the listing really current; by the time you see the list, some of the information may be as much as two months old. "NEED A GAME" is the best we can really do, and it's better than nothing; but it sure ain't God's gift to Diplomacy players.

It is, however, a place to start. What you're looking for may vary according to personal taste, but at the very least you want (probably) a game that will start fairly quickly after you join, at a rational price, run by a reliable gamesmaster. You may also want certain frills (a game magazine with a lot of interesting reading material, or very quick deadlines, or several games available in the same place at once, etc.). Whatever you want, the only way to find it is to settle down at your typewriter and start looking.

Probably the most important qualification you'll want in a gamesmaster is reliability. How to tell who is reliable and who isn't? I am afraid, dear friends, that we have just run into the biggest single difficulty which postal Diplomacy has to offer: It is, no matter how seriously one may take it, a hobby. As with any other hobby, the participants - players and publishers alike - may tire of it, or find other priorities intruding, and have to give the hobby up. Ergo, if you enter a postal Diplomacy game, you run a measurable chance of finding your game "orphaned," i.e. abandoned by its gamesmaster in midstream.

You'd think that the length of time a person has been publishing regularly would be a good measuring stick of reliability, but it's a less



valid criterion than you'd imagine. For instance, it's odd but true that if a gamesmaster is brand new, starting on his first few issues, he is much more likely to stick around for the end of a game than if he has been publishing regularly for, say, 12-15 months. That's because the interest span of a given publisher seems to hover somewhere around a year and a half; after that, which means after roughly two dozen issues, the thrill of a new hobby has worn off and the dull drudgery of printing another issue every damned third Saturday has set in. Almost nobody folds after two or three issues; almost nobody lasts more than two years. Thus the first game or two a publisher begins have a good chance; after that, prayer may be beneficial.

This looks a little bleak, eh? But let's be honest up front. If you play postal Diplomacy, you are bound to have some disappointments, chiefly the abandonment of games from time to time. Most such orphans are picked up, usually quite rapidly, by other publishers, and are then carried to completion. There may be a little confusion surrounding the transfer, and a brief hiatus during which all you can do is champ at the bit, but in all likelihood your game will stagger to its finish one way or the other. So it really isn't reasonable, if you enjoy postal Diplomacy play at all, to shy away from entering games merely because gamesmasters have a way of vanishing into the sunset; you must simply make the best judgments you can about where to play, and take your lumps when delivered.

And in partial mitigation of the strength of my earlier argument, it must be reminded that not all gamesmasters are unreliable; most will make a sincere effort to keep games going even if the starting publication folds, and in addition there are many, many VERY reliable publishers floating round. In the "NEED A GAME" lists we indicate the length of time a person has been regularly printing issues. This indicator, as I've indicated, is hardly infallible. But when you see the name John Boardman topping the list, followed by the numerical indication that he has been reliably publishing his magazine for sixteen years - which is, to put it mildly, phenomenal - then you know the man is going to see your game through unless he gets run over by a truck. Anything over two years is generally safe. (Not always, but generally.) Anything quite new is worth looking into. In between, get a sample issue; if it seems reasonably mature in style and efficient in approach (don't ask how to tell what "mature" and "efficient" mean here; you'll know; if the issue is sloppy, filled with childish silliness and badly organized, uses the English language abominably, and precedes each game report with a list of errors being corrected from the previous issue, you have a loser), what the hell, take a shot at it.

A word about game fees. Postage and sup-

plies costing what they do these days, a fair fee for a game seems to be about \$8-\$11. That's all-inclusive. Do not compute any refundable deposits in that total. If the magazine does not operate on the flat-rate system, but (for example) charges a small flat rate plus a subscription, then figure that the average postal game lasts ten game years, or thirty published issues. If a magazine asks a fee of \$2 plus a sub at 5 issues for a dollar, you can count on paying \$8 for your game.

Warnings have been issued from time to time about how you ought to avoid the apparent fee bargains. I say that's silly. Normally, money is not a critical point in a publisher's decision to continue or fold; nobody in this game makes a profit, and (unless he's on welfare and supporting four children) nobody loses his shirt. If a guy wants to charge a total of fifty cents per game, let him! On the other hand, let's be rational about this; we are talking about a hobby here, so steer clear of large investments of money. In my view, any game fee above twelve dollars, barring special circumstances, is an outrage. In addition, I strongly recommend against posting a "refundable deposit" in excess of five dollars; after all, a deposit is only refundable when it's refunded, right? There will be many who disagree with this discussion, and the detractors will not all be those who charge lots of money per game. I concede, there are different views. You'll just have to set your own maximum limits; I've given you mine.

"Well, gee whiz, thanks a lot, Conrad," you are now muttering, "You've spent all this time giving vague pointers on the pitfalls of unreliable publishers, and how to avoid or live with them; but we still aren't entered in a game!" AHA!, I reply, that's because you've been wasting your time reading this article. What you really ought to be doing is going out after a game in which to play. Go ahead and finish this article now, if you like; but after that, put the rest of the issue aside for a while and get to work.

In the early days of the hobby, when there were few players and fewer magazines, each publisher would supply lists of "new blood" - new players who had been contacted - and all the other publishers would then send sample issues. Those days are gone. Now, if you want a game, you gotta find it yourself; with rare exceptions, nobody is going to come looking for you. So turn to the list in the back of this magazine, entitled "NEED A GAME?", and plan your strategy.

Ideally, you should write to every name on the list, requesting a sample copy of each publication. (It is polite to enclose return postpaid envelopes, or two or three loose stamps, or thirty cents cash, or some such.) You will get replies from many of them. If some do not

reply, you might do the favor of letting DW know about it, as such publishers have no place in our listings.

The key, of course, is to write to as many potential gamesmasters as possible. The comments I see most often generally indicate that the would-be player merely picks one or two names off our listings, writes to them, and gets discouraged if there is no instant action. It doesn't always work that way; you must simply be widespread in your attentions. And you should also peruse the sample issues you receive for additional names; sometimes publishers who are not on our lists are nevertheless advertised by someone else's journal.

A few final pointers: Remember that a gamesmaster cannot begin his game until seven are signed for it. If you're the first to apply, you may have to wait a while (I've seen it take as long as six months, though this is quite unusual). Under no circumstances should you send any money to a gamesmaster until the game is actually announced as under way; if a publisher insists on payment far in advance, there's something fishy. And if you aren't willing to wait for any great length of time to get the game going, you should mention the fact when you first apply, to be fair all around. If there's a doubt in your mind as to the possible delay in starting, ask the gamesmaster for information (how many are signed, how long since the game opening was first announced, how many 'possible' players have been solicited but have not yet replied); you can then make reasonable judgments on the future. If six are signed up, the game won't normally take much longer to begin. On the other hand, if four are signed up but the game has been publicly open for four months, you may have quite a wait. This sort of informational decision is awfully vague, but at least you have some data where before you had none. If a publisher chooses not to answer your enquiries, look elsewhere.

Always request a sample copy of a person's publication before agreeing to play in a game, and particularly before sending money for anything (except the price of the sample, of course). This is one hobby where you simply do not buy sight-unseen. If you don't like what you see, you are under no obligation to proceed. If you enter a game and then decide you don't like what you see, you've created problems; that isn't friendly; don't do it.

Finally, be patient!

So much for the article; now for an idea. The editor of DIPLOMACY WORLD thinks that a good many of the problems of player-finding-game-finding-player might be alleviated if some sort of clearing-house were set up. This is not a complicated scheme; it's merely the

extension of the "NEED A GAME" list into a continuing service.

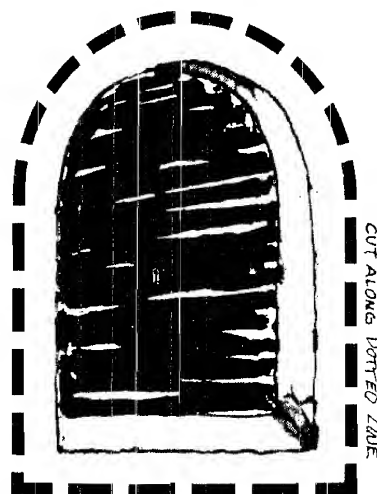
It would go as follows: Any person who has any interest in a game could write to DW so stating. His name would then be entered on a list which would be available to any publisher who wanted it (cost: a stamped envelope). In addition, the potential player (for a stamped envelope) would be sent a list of all publishers who are known to have openings. In both cases, dates would be indicated so that the recipients could know the currency of the listings; names would be automatically dropped from the publisher list after three months, and from the player list after two months, unless renewed.

This service would, of course, replace the "NEED A GAME" list, which would then be dropped from the magazine and replaced by a mere reference to the service.

This service is NOT in operation now. First, I wish to hear from publishers; would you be interested and willing to participate? It can't work if publishers aren't involved on a steady basis (remember, if we put this system to use, we will no longer be culling magazines to prepare lists on our own; it'll all be up to you). Right this minute, before you forget, drop me a postcard (P.O. Box 626, San Diego, CA 92112) and say 'yessir' or 'no way.' (North America only, please.) If interest is strong enough, we'll be open for business as of next issue.

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# DESIGNING VARIANTS- WHY?

by KEN ST. ANDRE

The original Calhamer game of Diplomacy is great - but dull! Dull, dull, dull! There are so many fabulous possibilities opened up to the person of creative imagination by the mere existence of Diplomacy that it is a shame not to take advantage of them.

And we are all men and women (a few in this hobby - would that there were many more) of creative ability. To be human is to be creative in many different ways, and to express your creativity is to live up to your human potentiality. Game design is a hobby, and a form of art, just as much as writing fiction or poetry, painting, drawing, sculpting, playing or composing music, doing beadwork or macrame, etc., ad infinitum. When you are finished, you will have an unique, one-of-a-kind work-of-art that may also be a lot of fun to play with.

Well, enough on why you can create a Diplomacy variant if you want to. It seems almost banal to add that the very process of doing so will inevitably contribute to a heightened awareness and appreciation of such diversified arts as cartography, rule-writing, history, literature, military science, economics and politics.

And now for a few do's and don't's. Many of these proscriptions will seem blatantly obvious to you, but I have found in process of creating some six entirely new variants that they aren't. If you just plunge into game designing, like a brave swimmer in an icy pool, like I did, you will surely find yourself omitting one or more of these points, and the final product may suffer from it.

Number one "Do": Base your variant on something that you are already interested in - whether it may be Aztec history (as in my game AZTEAN), or current African politics (Peters' SECOND IMPERIALISM), or the history of the dinosaurs. (Can you see it? A game based on the Mesozoic era, with million-year turns.) The game need not actually simulate the historical results or the novel's plot, but it should be based on a subject that will have some intrinsic interest, both for you and for others. By choosing something you are already interested in, it will be easier for you to sustain enthusiasm for it, and if you are enthusiastic, it will be easier to convince other people that the game is worth playing. Whatever you do, don't just say, "Well, now I will design a game. It will have good guys and bad guys,

supply centers and a map. Voila!" Nobody will want to play it.

Number two "Do": Start your game designing process around the map (if you use a map at all). Start with a map that someone else has already drawn for some unrelated purpose. We may think that we are great abstract map designers, but most of us really aren't. So if it is at all possible, start with a map that has proved its value by getting published somewhere else first. Two things to look for are: (1) Is your model map interesting in its original context - not just informative, but intrinsically interesting? (Factors to be considered here are size, details, and the contents of the map.) (2) Will there be enough supply centers for game purposes? (You will probably need between 20 and 100. Less than 20 is too simple for an experienced gamer; more than 100 will be too cluttered for aesthetic purposes, and it will also tend to increase the playing time of the game.) Once you have found a map to work from, you can alter it to meet your own needs. As a general rule, you will never find the perfect map ready-made, you will always have to change it to suit your own purposes, which makes it then an original work and takes care of the problem of copyright violations. In general, you will simplify it. The name of every hill, river and village is not necessary. You are creating a gameboard, not a geological survey or a roadmap. Make your final map as simple, stark and clean as you can get it. Finally, you will divide your map into a number of sectors. Sectors can be laid out upon geographic, economic, or purely arbitrary imaginary boundaries. Don't use regular geometric figures, such as squares, hexagons, circles, etc. They are easy to do, but very dull, and are more suitable for Avalon-Hill wargames than Diplomacy variants. Try to design sectors large enough to put at least 3 regular Diplomacy wooden counters in them. (I like to work on posterboard, and I know others who work on large sheets of tracing paper. At any rate, it will help you to work large.) Then, when your map is photo-reduced and printed, the sectors will still be large enough to stick a pin into. Lastly, and this is purely an aesthetic stricture, beautify the map if you can. The best way to do this is to persuade an artist to do the final version of the map for you, one who can add a decorative touch to it on the general theme of the game. An example is my map for my AZTEAN variant, which was finalized by Liz Danforth. In the Chichimec Desert are a couple of Chichimecs in native war costume. Above the map name is a scene of human sacrifice on the steps of a pyramid, all drawn in the original Aztec style, a feat which is beyond my abilities, though I planned the map and suggested the drawings. The whole thing looks at least 100% better than my BAR-

SOOM map, which was all done by my own hand and without art. If you are not an artist, and can't find one to help you, remember to be as neat and plain, stark and simple as possible. If you have chosen well, the natural contours of the boundaries on the map will do their job and snare at least the passing interest of everyone who sees it.

The next most important thing is to write the rules. First of all, number them. This is something that didn't occur to me until my third variant. With some thought you can evolve an elaborate and detailed system that has a place for everything and everything in its place - or you can simply go one, two, three, but numbering the rules will help you organize your material. It will make it easier for players to look up a specific point they may be in doubt on, and it will clarify your own thinking and help you avoid omitting important details.

Not only should you number rules, but also try to keep related material together. Put everything about the map in one section (not necessarily one number), and everything about victory conditions somewhere else. It is also a good idea in rule writing not to take too much for granted, but to try and explain every game term you use. (I often slip up here, as I have a tendency to assume that everyone knows what Support means. Everyone doesn't.) I have also found that when writing rules it helps to start with a brief introduction to the game, something that tells the players what you are trying to do, and why. Again, it is an interest-raising device - it's also convenient for explaining things to someone who comes into the game in the middle.

Now that the rules and map are finished comes the hardest part in the whole process - playtesting. Gather your friends (or even strangers off the street) and play the damned thing. Play it to the bitter end if possible, or at least until a trend has been established. Listen carefully to all the criticism you get. You don't have to accept it (after all, you are the Creative Genius and the playtesters are just nuds), but at least listen to it. Don't waste your time trying to justify what you did unless someone really asks you why thus-and-such works the way it does. You don't necessarily have to change your brainchild, but you might find that the ideas of others spark some new or revisionary ideas in your own mind. Really good, usable ideas are precious things, and you need not be too particular where they came from, so long as they suit your purpose.

My last piece of advice is to let the game evolve. Nothing is really static in this world - why should your game rules be eternally fixed? Evolution is a way of weeding out entities unfit for survival (and it applies as well to automobiles as it does to apes). My three

major Diplomacy variants - Young Kingdoms, Barscoonian Blitz and Aztlan - are all changing into advanced versions of themselves. I can't help asking after playing a game for a while, what could be improved about this game? What rule change (or map change - these being the two things you can change in a Diplomacy variant) could turn this into a completely different and even more fascinating pasttime?

Don't expect too much out of variant designing. Just because you have created the world's most fabulous new Diplomacy variant (and when you've just finished the creative process, that is exactly how you ought to feel about it), don't expect the fame of a Lew Pulsipher or a Dick Vedder overnight. 99% of all variant designers, including myself, are completely unknown, even by name, to 99% of all variant players. If you really want someone to play your game face-to-face, then you're going to have to convince people that said game is the greatest innovation since booze and is probably a good substitute for sex. If you want it to be played postally, you may have to publish your own postal Diplomacy fanzine - but then, these are easy things to do. I know, because I've done them, and so have several dozen other fellows around the world. If your game is that one-in-a-million freak that perfectly matches the prevailing mood of the public, and if you find some means of distributing it to a mass market, then you may enjoy a limited financial success in 2 to 10 years. But regardless of all that, and everyone knows that money and fame are only side effects of successful living, not things to be striven for on their own account, you will have fun. If you're not enjoying the experience, quit!

P.S. Before writing up variant rules, it will help if you can at least look at the rules for the original game.

P.P.S. With minor adaptations, many Diplomacy variants also make excellent Risk variants, for those of you who kind of enjoy rolling dice.

P.P.P.S. Under certain conditions I sometimes publish new Diplomacy variants that have some element of fantasy, s-f or ancient history in them, in my 'zine STORMBRINGER. Write for details: 2232 E. Pírchot, Phoenix, Arizona 85016.

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((Ken is just a wee bit modest. He is one of the best of the variant designers, and is also responsible for a number of excellent, well-known and respected non-Diplomacy games - MONSTERS! MONSTERS!, TUNNELS AND TROLLS, and a few others.

((In the next issue, DIPLOMACY WORLD - notwithstanding the statement elsewhere in this issue about the variant centerfold - is hopeful of printing Ken's AZTLAN. If we have the rules by press time, we shall.))

# FRENCH GAME PERFORMANCE

by  
MARK  
BERCH

In DIPLOMACY WORLD 13, Len Lakofka repeated the old Diplomacy adage that in the opening game one should not grow too fast, but will do better by running with the pack. He thoughtfully provided precise definitions of growing too fast and too slow, and of the opening game. In my reply article in DW 16 I showed statistically that, at least for Austria, this advice was quite wrong. I have now been taken to task by Robert Lipton in a wry letter in DW 17 (and more bluntly on page 1 of Bob's fanzine THE MIXUMAXU GAZETTE 71) for merely proving the obvious: "...a brilliant exposition of the obscure philosophic point that the more centers one has, the better one's chances of winning are." I am quite aware that in Diplomacy, as in much of life, "them that has, gets" and that the 17-center player has a much better chance of winning than the one-center player. But that's not the question I was addressing. The belief persists that it is dangerous to overdo this in the opening game. This belief cannot be dismissed as just a fluke on Lakofka's part. Thus, Gary Burce in the first of a three-part series writes: "Rule II states, if you are the aggressor (on the stronger side), keep the number of units low in 1901." (CLAW AND FANG 68) In DW 13 Allan Calhamer, in an analysis of 43 Italian games, suggests that Italy does better with 4 centers in 1901 than 5. And in the last issue of DW, the theory surfaced again, this time for France. In an otherwise excellent article on the "sooper" opening for France, Richard Nash states flatly: "First of all, you can't take all 6 in 1901 if you want to win," "and woe betide anyone taking all three ((Spa, Por, Bel)) in 1901!" and "Three builds make France unplayable against competent opposition." Is this really true? Can France grow too fast in 1901?

I have taken all the games through EVERYTHING 29 in which France had six centers in Winter 1901 ("6CF"). To simplify matters, I have only looked at those games which ended in an outright victory for some power (though not necessarily for France), as opposed to a draw:

## DISTRIBUTION OF WINS

|     | "6CF" (99 games) | All others (417 games) |
|-----|------------------|------------------------|
| AUS | 11.1%            | 14.1%                  |
| ENG | 14.1%            | 13.7%                  |
| FRA | 27.3%            | 10.6%                  |
| GER | 4.0%             | 16.5%                  |
| ITA | 11.1%            | 8.9%                   |
| RUS | 17.2%            | 22.8%                  |
| TUR | 15.2%            | 13.4%                  |

A glance at the figures shows that Nash's theory is utterly wrong. In the 6CF games, Franch wins far exceed Russia's. Indeed, while the 6CF games account for only 19% of the total games, they produced 38% of the Franch victories. And check out those German figures! While Nash touts his "sooper" opening as the way to take on Germany, it is clear that 6CF is an unmitigated disaster for Germany. It is interesting to note that England is unaffected by 6CF, and Italy appears to be slightly helped. This latter item may be due to the fact that the taking of Bel or Mun signals a northern campaign for France, giving Italy a much freer hand in the east.

It is true that Nash puts a qualification on his advice, namely that the opposition must be "competent." I'm not sure how useful this is; assuming that someone is incompetent so early in the game is a very risky matter. I do note that only one of the seven HOOSIER ARCHIVES demo games, 1971BC, featured a 6CF. The French neighbors were Prosnitz, Key and Walker, all experienced players. France won.

And while I am on the subject of 6CF games and the play of France, there is the matter of, in Nicky Palmer's words, "the unfortunate Adam Gruen." Of all the advice given in Gruen's article on the play of France, "The Sleeper" (DW 15), none is more curious than his suggestions for taking 3 builds in Winter 1901. He begins by setting out three "typical situations." These situations are in fact quite typical, and while they don't cover everything, together they embrace the substantial majority of the situations which France can expect. Varying advice is given for 1 or 2 builds, but for 3 the advice is always exactly the same: F Mar, F Bre, A Par. This is extremely unimaginative and potentially dangerous advice. It appears to arise from his belief that "France will do best by keeping parity between fleets and armies" (and indeed, Gruen's advice for 2 builds never includes 2 armies). But is this realistic advice? Is this how the game is actually played?

To answer the latter question, I have located 68 postal games in which I could find the three builds for France. These games are drawn from 35 fanzines, with Boardman numbers ranging from 1966 to 1977. These give the following results:

One army (per Gruen): 29.  
Two or three armies: 39.

This is completely inconsistent with Gruen's advice. What is causing so many people to build two or three armies? To answer this, it is necessary to back up to the Fall to see where the supply centers come from:

SPA, POR, BEL: 48  
SPA, POR, MUN: 17  
OTHERS: 3

I think you can now guess one reason why all those armies were built. If you've taken

Munich, that's your sole forward army; the other is buried in Iberia. Germany is going to be madder than hell, and you're going to build just one army, Gruen?? No way! All 17 of those Frances who had taken Munich in fact built at least two armies. Note also that: (1) A Fall 1901 stab of Germany is entirely consistent with Gruen's first "situation," and (2) Although frequent mention is made in the article of trying to take Belgium, none is made of trying for Munich. So Gruen's failure to ever recommend building more than one army reveals a blind spot - no consideration is given of going for Munich in 1901.

But how did this blind spot come about? The answer to this reveals a far more serious flaw in "The Sleeper." Did Gruen just think that taking Munich is too naughty for a novice? A mere oversight? Not enough room to cover everything? No. In order to take Munich, first you must take Burgundy in the spring. But in the strange world of "The Sleeper," this never happens! Oh, it's mentioned in the lengthy table of opening moves, but in the meat of the article, where the pros and cons of various openings are discussed, there is frequent mention of going to Picardy and even of going to Gascony, but actually trying to go to Burgundy is nowhere even mentioned! This is terrible advice to give to novices, whom I now wish to address directly.

Regardless of the impression you may have gotten from Gruen's article, going to Burgundy, with or without support, is an entirely respectable and extremely popular opening move. Indeed, if Mark Weidmark's statistics (DW III/1) are representative, 60% of the players ordered A Par-Bur, half with support. Or look at the 7 HOOGLER ARCHIVES demo games. In 5 of these, an army was successfully ordered to Burgundy, 3 times with support. The advantages of this move are legion. A German army in Burgundy is probably the worst single thing that can happen France in Spring 1901, because it can threaten two home centers and the keystone province of Gascony. Further, its forward position makes an anti-French alliance much more attractive to Italy and/or England. On the other hand, if France gets into Burgundy, she has great flexibility. That army can interact with Italy (by defending Marseilles without risking the taking of Spain), England (in the Belgian sector) and Germany (in the Belgian sector or by taking Munich). Unless you're quite sure what will be done with Army Munich and Army Venice, and are not terribly interested in affecting the fate of Belgium, Army Burgundy is an extremely handy thing to have. Further, if you're hell-bent on taking Belgium (but don't want to offend with F Bre-Eng), then you should have units in both Picardy and Burgundy. While A Par-Gas and A Par-Pic, both discussed in Gruen's article, do have their own advantages, you should not overlook - as Gruen has - A Par-Bur or A Mar-Bur.

# «FUGUE»

by "FARLAK"

I am easily the world's worst Diplomacy player. My strategic concepts are untenable, my diplomatic maneuvering is a laugh, and my tactical play is completely underwhelming. I've never finished above fifth place (England and France dropped out early in that one) and I've never seen the Spring of '05. My most infamous loss occurred when playing Austria (I somehow managed to find six other people who had never heard of me). Through my perfidious, but inane, diplomatic overtures, I found myself attacked by four neighbors and threatened by two others in the spring of '02. I was homeless by autumn. (A 60,000 word expose of my nauseating tactics is soon to be published.)

Well, fleets and armies had always been a great bother to me (all those silly rules about coastlines and canals and air movement were certainly unclear), but I quickly learned to play without them. Oddly enough, my enemies were now almost non-existent, and I suspected some diabolical treachery. Nonetheless, I quickly submitted my Spring 1903 orders:

TOTAL COLLAPSE IS IMMINENT. THE PEOPLE FACE THEIR DARKEST HOUR AS TINY FINLAND STRAINS TO STEM THE INVADING RED ARMY (oops, wrong war), AS AUSTRIA-HUNGARY STRAINS TO STEM THE INVADING WHITE, YELLOW AND GREEN (AND POSSIBLY BLACK) ARMIES. THE SUICIDE OF FRANZ JOSEF HAS TOUCHED OFF RIOTING IN OUR GLORIOUS CAPITAL, AND THE STREETS ARE RUNNING WITH BLOOD. THE LAST OF THE ROYAL FAMILY HAVE BEEN SAFELY WITHDRAWN TO A SMALL, UNKNOWN ISLAND IN THE TYRRHENIAN SEA. WE STAND ALONE AMONG THE FREE POWERS, PROUD, STRONG AND BLOODY. IN THEIR HOUR OF NEED, OUR COUNTRYMEN HAVE BEEN ABANDONED AND FORSAKEN BY THEIR WEAK-WILLED NEIGHBORS, WHO HAVE FAILED HER IN EVERY WAY. THE ROYAL FAMILY LEAVES YOU WITH THESE WORDS:

"We have asked for guns, and we have got sympathy.

We have asked for bullets, and we have got apathy.

We have asked for men, and we have got stabbed."

Orders, Austria-Hungary, Spring 1903:

Detachment in Elba  
supports  
Detachment in Elba.

I must modestly admit that my spring move was an unqualified success. All my objectives

were achieved and not one person had even attempted a stab (a new personal record). Spurred on by this heady victory, I began a subversive campaign aimed at undermining any relations between the other powers. (By the way, I had finally given up issuing movement and combat orders - much too easy to misconstrue, as well as often being used against me.) Using a recent reception for the royal family of Hapsburgs, currently summering in Elba, I launched my new plan using overheard remarks and comments:

"My dear, how stunning! Your sister's clothes are so becoming!"

"You see, if he had just held back the 4th Brigade for only two hours, the enemy right would never have...."

"Italy? Those turkeys are always hungary."

"The first time our eyes met across a crowded room, my heart...."

"Did you hear how Franz really did it? Well, he took this long, sharpened stake...."

"Yes, we pretty well have Germany sucked in right now. He completely trusts...."

"The army in Bohemia is no threat. It's the night life in Bohemia that is the real problem."

"My pulse quickened, I became speechless, as your radiant...."

"Say, isn't that the French ambassador? Whatever could he be talking about to the Russian envoy?"

"Huh?"

"No, no. You still don't understand. Just two hours, and then the enemy right...."

"Delenda est Constantinople."

"Your eyes so bright, your lips so full, are matched only by...."

"Puhutekko suomea?"

"Oops, sorry about that. Wasn't a new shirt, I hope."

"Your lips so full, your...what? You're kidding! Well, excuse me, I must be off...let's see, you said your cousin was the one with the sequins and long gloves, right?"

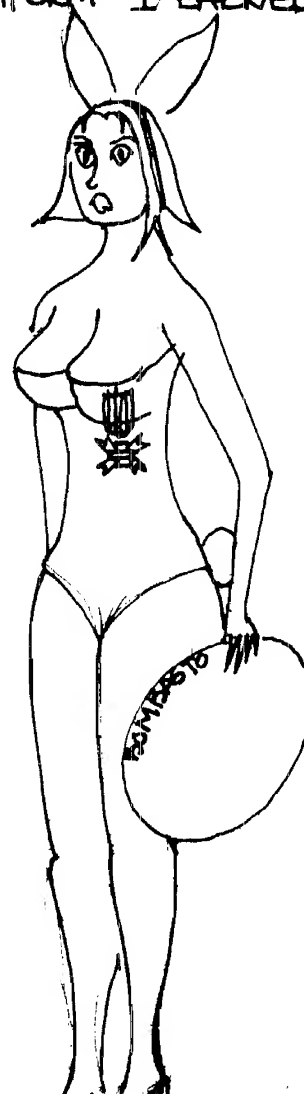
"Look, I'll draw it on a napkin. The 4th Brigade is the gravy stain. Now, only two hours...."

Again I had astounding success. The various leaders came grovelling at my doorstep, pleading for me to release my source of information. But I stood firm, a veritable rock of Gibraltar resisting those who were mere grains of sand washing at my shore.

And so it went, my position of power becoming greater with every turn, while my enemies slowly eroded and suffered; but not always in silence. At long last the Great Day arrived: the final standings of our game. I eagerly tore open the envelope from the gamesmaster. But after quickly scanning the brief report, I fell

back, aghast. I was listed seventh! (Not an unusual result for me, but this game had been different!) Despite my vehement and frequent protests, the results were allowed to stand (something about control of supply centers - another silly rule that I could never fathom). Knowing I had badly outplayed my opponents, I have decided to lodge my lawful complaints with the Institute for Diplomatic Studies, the Board of Directors for DIPLOMACY WORLD, and a nefarious Sicilian firm which shall remain nameless. I am confident that the game result will be overturned, my protest upheld, and justice meted out to the guilty. Sic semper tyrannis.

IT'S A DIPLODOCUS MEDAL, MR. HEFNER,  
AND I DON'T CARE IF IT ISN'T PART  
OF THE UNIFORM - I EARNED IT!





# HOOSIER ARCHIVES

## DEMONSTRATION GAME NO. 7

THE YOUNG TURKS' GAME - 1977CL

REPRINTED FROM HOOSIER ARCHIVES 227-234

Spring 1905

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| AUSTRIA:        | <u>A Mun-Bur</u> , <u>A Tyo-Mun</u> , A Bos S A Tyo-Mun, A Tus-Fie, <u>A Bul-Con</u> , |
| (Boyer)         | <u>A Ser-Bul</u> .   |
| ENGLAND:        | F Iri-Lvp, A Edi S F Iri-Lvp, F Eng-Nth, F Bel S F Eng-Nth.                            |
| (McLendon)      |  |
| FRANCE:         | F Cly-Nat, A Bre-Pic, <u>A Par-Bur</u> , A Por-Spa, F Spa(sc)-Mid,                     |
| (Schlickbernd): | F Lyo-Mar.   |
| GERMANY:        | A Kie-Ruh, <u>F Den-Kie</u> , <u>A Ber-Kie</u> , F Pru-Bal.                            |
| (Fox)           |  |
| ITALY:          | A Pie-Ven, A Rom-Tus, F Tyn-Lyo, F Wes S F Tyn-Lyo, F Aeg                              |
| (Mahler):       | S AUSTRIAN A Bul-Con.  |
| RUSSIA:         | <u>A Fin-Swe</u> , <u>F Swe-Den</u> , F StP(sc)-Bot, <u>A Sil-Ber</u> , F Sev-Bla,     |
| (Verheiden)     | A Rum-Sev.   |
| TURKEY:         | A Arm-Smy, <u>A Con S A Arm-Smy</u> , F Ank S A Con.                                   |
| (McKeon)        |  |

Fall/Winter 1905

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| AUSTRIA: | A Mun-Ber, A Tyo-Mun, A Boh S A Tyo-Mun, A Pie S ITALIAN A Tus-Mar, A Bul-Con, <u>A Ser-Bul</u> . Owns: Bud, Tri, Vie, Bul, Ser, Mun, <u>Ber</u> (7). Build A Vie.                 |
| ENGLAND: | A Edi-Nwy, F Nth C A Edi-Nwy, F Liv H, F Bel H. Owns: Edi, Lon, Nwy, Bel, <u>Liv</u> (5). Builds F Edi.  |
| FRANCE:  | A Par-Bur, A Pic S A Par-Bur, F Mid-Por, F Nat-Mid, A Spa S F <u>Mar</u> , <u>F Mar S A Spa/a/</u> . Owns: Bre, Par, Por, Spa, <del>Mar</del> , <del>Lvp</del> (4). Removes A Pic. |
| GERMANY: | <u>A Ruh-Bel</u> , <u>F Den-Kie</u> , <u>A Ber-Kie</u> (/r/ d), <u>F Bal-Swe</u> (/r/ d). Owns: Kie, Hol, Den, <del>Ber</del> (3). Builds A Kie.                                   |
| ITALY:   | A Tus-Mar, F Lyo C A Tus-Mar, A Ven-Tus, <u>F Wes-Spa(sc)</u> , F Aeg S AUSTRIAN A Bul-Con. Owns: Nap, Rom, Ven, Tun, Gre, Mar (6). Builds F Nap.                                  |
| RUSSIA:  | F Bot-Bal, F Swe S F Bot-Bal, A Fin S F Swe, A Sil S AUSTRIAN A Mun-Ber, A Sev-Arm, F Bla S A Sev-Arm. Owns: Mos, Sev, StP, War, Rum, Swe (6). Constant.                           |
| TURKEY:  | A Con H, F Ank S A Con, A Smy S A Con. Owns: Ank, Con, Smy (3). Constant.  |

Putting together this analysis is probably more work than the end result would indicate, and I'd like to take a moment to thank those who give me aid. Conrad, of course, gets a mighty thanks for entrusting me with the job in the first place. So do all the people who rated my analysis so high in the feedback (your checks are in the mail, boys). A very special thanks goes to Thomas Mirti (the self-proclaimed "best tactician in Vegas") for looking over my shoulder, pointing out important things I've missed, and offering some new insights.

This obligatory crap out of the way, let us begin with our real purpose for being here.

Winter 1904

The purposes behind the Winter 1904 builds are fairly self-evident. England builds to counter the French raiding party in Clyde. The Russian fleet build illustrates the particular frame of mind he is in. At this point, his policy concerning Austria is at least one of non-aggression, and possibly of active alliance of sorts. The fact that the fleet is in the south coast of St.Petersburg bodes ill for the Germans, and eventually for England.

1905

Russia's actions in the Spring declare her as at least an outside partner in the clarifying Austro-Italian alliance. I say "clarifying" because moves of previous years did not neces-



Spring 1906

AUSTRIA: A Ber S A Mun, A Boh S A Mun, A Mun S ITALIAN A Mar-Bur, A Vie-Tyo, A Pie S ITALIAN A Tus-Mar, A Bul-Con, A Ser-Bul.  
ENGLAND: F Edi-Nwg, F Lvp-Iri, A Nwy-Hol, F Nth C A Nwy-Hol, F Bel S A Nwy-Hol.  
FRANCE: A Bur-Mar, A Spa S A Bur-Mar, F Mid S A Spa, F Por S A Spa.  
GERMANY: A Ruh S A Kie, A Kie S F Den, F Den S A Kie.  
ITALY: F Wes-Mid, A Mar-Bur, A Tus-Mar, F Lyo C A Tus-Mar, F Nap-Tyn, F Aeg S AUSTRIAN A Bul-Con.  
RUSSIA: A Fin-StP, F Swe S F Bal, F Bal S F Swe, A Sil-Pru, A Arm-Ank, F Bla S A Arm-Ank.  
TURKEY: A Con S F Ank/a/, F Ank S A Con, A Smy S F Ank.

Fall/Winter 1906

AUSTRIA: A Ber-Kie, A Mun S A Ber-Kie, A Boh S A Mun, A Tyo S A Mun, A Pie S ITALIAN A Tus-Mar, A Con S ITALIAN F Aeg-Smy, A Bul S A Con. Owns: Bud, Tri, Vie, Bul, Ser, Ber, Mun, Con (8). Builds A Vie.  
ENGLAND: F Nwg-Nwy, F Nth S F Nwg-Nwy, A Hol S F Bel, F Bel S A Hol, F Iri S FRENCH F Mid. Owns: Edi, Lvp, Lon, Nwy, Bel, Hol (6). Builds F Edi.  
FRANCE: A Spa-Mar, A Bur S A Spa-Mar, F Mid-Spa(sc), F Por S F Mid-Spa(sc). Owns: Bre, Par, Por, Spa (4). Constant.  
GERMANY: A Ruh S A Kie, A Kie S F Den, F Den S A Kie(/r/ Hel). Owns: Kie, ~~Arl~~, ~~Den~~ (1). Removes A Ruh, A Kie.  
ITALY: A Mar-Gas, A Tus-Mar, F Lyo C A Tus-Mar, F Wes-Naf, F Tyn-Wes, F Aeg-Smy. Owns: Nap, Rom, Ven, Tun, Gre, Mar, Smy (7). Builds A Ven.  
RUSSIA: A StP-Fin, F Bal-Den, F Swe S F Bal-Den, A Pru-Lvn, A Arm-Ank, F Bla S A Arm-Ank. Owns: Mos, Sev, StP, War, Rum, Swe, Ank, Den (8). Builds F StP(nc), A Mos.  
TURKEY: F Ank H/a/, A Smy H(/r/ d). Owns: ~~Arl~~, ~~Den~~, ~~StP~~ (0). Out.

sarily imply such an alliance, though it might very well have been in existence since gamestart. Only now is it becoming more and more obvious to an off-board observer.

Continued pressure by these three force Turkey to withdraw to his original starting positions (going back to the fetal position, as it were....). By moving to Smyrna, his armies are in the best possible position to resist the Italian-assisted threat across the straits of Constantinople. However, moving the army from Armenia takes a lot of pressure off the Russian. The Black Sea falls and the army in Rumania moves to Sevastopol in preparation for an eastern, land invasion of Turkey. Anyone know "Requiem for a Sultan?"

Caught in the middle, Germany (a standby in an inherited and not exactly bright spot) makes good use of the self-standoff concept to protect Kiel from a possible Austrian attack from Munich, while retaining control of Berlin and Denmark.

But the Austrian's designs are not on further German conquests at this time. Rather, Boyer wants to use Germany as a highway to get at France. Piedmont is put to similar use.

Meanwhile, Italy's fleets are set up nicely in the west.

France abandons the somewhat half-hearted invasion of Scotland while England uses the move to do much needed tidying-up of the situation at home.

But fall finds Schlickbernd in Burgundy, but booted out of Marseilles by the Italian amphibious operation. The wisdom of the F Mid-Por move escapes me. If Italy were the main concern, and the French moves seem to indicate this, then why not place the fleet in North Africa, where it could at least exert some influence on the failing situation in the western half of the Mediterranean?

The grab of Marseilles is interesting, especially since it is the Italian who makes the gain, supported by the previously mischievous Austrian army now in Piedmont. Also, the true purpose of the spring move of A Mun-Bur comes out; it prevented the positioning of another army that could have supported Marseilles. In fall, it is not so imperative to keep the French out of Burgundy, and this leaves the Austrian army in Munich free to do other things...

Spring 1907

AUSTRIA: A Mun-Kie, A Ber S A Mun-Kie, A Tyo-Mun, A Boh S A Tyo-Mun, A Pie-Tyo, A Vie S A Pie-Tyo, A Bul S A Con, A Con S A Bul.  
 ENGLAND: F Nwy H(/r/ Nwg), F Nth-Den, A Hol H, F di-Nth, F Bel S F Edi-Nth, F Iri S FRENCH F Mid.  
 FRANCE: F Mid-Eng, A Bur-Bel, F Por-Mid, A Spa-Gas(/r/ Mar).  
 GERMANY: F Hel S ENGLISH F Nth-Den.  
 ITALY: F Lyo-Spa(sc), A Gas S F Lyo-Spa(sc), F Wes S F Lyo-Spa(sc), F Naf-Mid, A Tus-Pie, A Ven S A Tus-Pie, F Smy H.  
 RUSSIA: F StP(nc)-Bar, A Fin-Nwy, A Swe S A Fin-Nwy, A Mos-StP, A Lvn S A Mos-Stp, F Den-Ska, F Bla S A Ank, A Ank H.

Fall/Winter 1907

AUSTRIA: A Ber-Pru, A Boh-Sil, A Vie-Gal, A Kie S ENGLISH F Den, A Mun S A Kie, A Tyo-Vie, A Bul-Rum, A Con H. Owns: Bud, Tri, Vie, Bul, Ser, Ber, Mun, Con, Kie, Rum (10). Builds A Bud, A Tri.  
 ENGLAND: F Bel-Eng, F Iri S F Bel-Eng, A Hol-Bel, F Nth-Lon, F Nwg-Nth, F Den H. Owns: Edi, Lvp, Lon, Bel, Hol, ~~Nth~~, Den (6). Constant.  
 FRANCE: F Eng S ENGLISH F Iri-Mid (/r/ Wal), A Mar-Spa, F Por S A Mar-Spa, A Bur-Mar. Owns: Bre, Far, Por, Spa (4). Constant.  
 GERMANY: F Hel H. Owns: ~~Kie~~ (0). Out.  
 ITALY: F Naf-Mid, F Wes S F Naf-Mid, A Pie-Mar, A Gas S A Pie-Mar, F Spa(sc) S A Pie-Mar(/r/ Lyo), A Ven-Pie, F Smy H. Owns: Nap, Rom, Ven, Tun, Gre, Mar, Smy (7). Constant.  
 RUSSIA: A Nwy H, F Bar S A Nwy, F Swe-Bal, F Ska-Swe, A StP-Fin, A Lvn H, F Bla S A Ank, A Ank H. Owns: Mos, Sev, StP, War, Swe, Ank, ~~Rum~~, ~~Den~~, Nwy (?). Removes F Bar.

....like grab Berlin, with the interesting aid of Russia. One can only speculate, but from the outside perspective of analyst it would seem that Berlin would have gone to the Russians. Can Verheiden really allow Boyer to get so strong? Perhaps the Austrian offer was too sweet to turn down (or too threatening).

Winter is a good time to note the changes the year has wrought. McLendon has regrouped, has units in his outer holdings, and is not directly threatened. The Germans are able to remove Fleet Baltic and build the more useful Army Kiel.

Take a close look at the Austrian and Italian builds; in fact, dig up your old DWs and look at all their builds. Note something interesting? Yep, Austria built nothing but armies, and Italy built nothing but fleets. To many, myself included, this is one of the earmarks of a very solid Austro-Italian alliance. It tends to allow the powers to concentrate in diverse areas and avoid duplication and superfluous units. Most important, it makes trust a little easier.

1906

Boyer spends much of this year supporting Mahler's pieces into better positions, and a center as well. Once into Constantinople,

the Austrian can return the favor and support Italy into Smyrna. Good alliances are sweet, are they not? And usually mutually profitable....

The two French armies manage to hold onto Spain for the year, but the placement of an army in Gascony poses a severe threat on France because of its many options (it can support the convoy, or go for one or two centers); Schlickbernd does not have the units to play such an expensive guessing game.

England's position strengthens considerably. The capture of Holland consolidates his holdings on the continent, and is a good example of smart timing. One might expect such a move in the fall. The two northern fleets are enough to make sure that there is an English presence in Norway.

Germany's moves for both spring and fall are identical, and are probably about the best defense possible considering the multiple attacks he is subjected to.

In the southeast, Turkey reels from the combined blows of the three-way coalition. Constantinople falls, cracking the fetal (I could pun here for 'futile,' but I won't) defense and spelling his doom. Turkey's moves show that he feels the Russian threat to be the most severe (or distasteful), but by fall he can make no effective defense and is split three ways, almost certainly as per plan.

Fall finds France forging belatedly into the Mediterranean, and in the process staving off the Italian for another move. To the east, Russia falls upon Germany, taking Denmark and gaining a southern access to the important sea areas of any future war with England.

England lends a little unneeded aid to the French. Noting the French position, McLendon should probably consider attacking France; propping him up may not be worthwhile and may give it all to Italy.

Winter is good for the three-way alliance; they prosper while all others save England go hungry or worse.

Germany's opting to retain the fleet rather than the army may not be as ludicrous as it first appears. He's only going to last another year anyway, and the fleet will allow him more flexibility in gaining a little revenge against him who hurt him worse. (You guess it; England or Russia?)

Russia and England arm as might be expected, with an eye to each other.

Austria builds yet another army; a fleet is hardly needed, as Italy rules the Mediterranean. Italy does so as well! This could mean any one of a number of things: (1) The army is needed in France (most likely); (2) There is jockeying for position in the alliance; or (3) My fleet/army build theory was all wrong (sigh). Take your pick; the next few years will reveal the answer and, I believe, much more.

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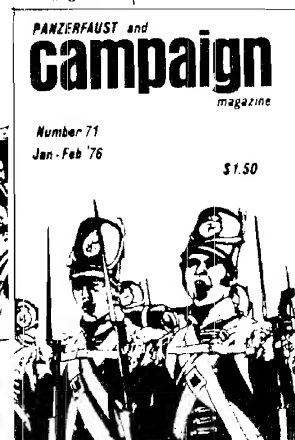
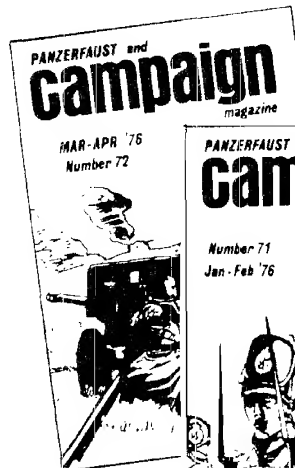
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# VARIANT DESCRIPTIONS

by DER GARVEY

((EDITOR'S NOTE: Whatever curtailment is made in the variant section of this magazine, Der's column will remain fairly well intact. That's because we think it the most important and interesting of the variant sections.))

I'd like to make one minor change to the format of these descriptions. The number of areas on the map will, in future, be divided into two categories: Land and Sea. This was first suggested by Lew Pulsipher, but at the time I didn't think it was that important. Having given it a little thought, though, I think maybe it is. If you know how many land spaces there are, you can get a better idea of the density of the Supply Centres. Anyway, from now on the format will be:

Game Name // Designer's Name // Number of players // Variant Number // Miller Number // Number of Supply Centres // Number of Land Spaces // Number of Sea Spaces

The only variation from this will be for abstract games, or SF games where there is no distinction between Land and Sea spaces (like Ecliptic below).

GLOBAL VARIANT // Lew Pulsipher // 7 // hc // 118 // 36 // 68 // 35

As the name suggests, this game is based on a map of the whole world, not just Europe. Players can therefore move their units right around the globe. In practise, this means that units can move off the Eastern edge of the map and back on again at the Western edge, and vice-versa.

One advantage of this arrangement over more usual maps is that it eliminates "corner" positions, such as Turkey has in regular Diplomacy, which give an unfair advantage due to their good defensive positions.

The game uses 7 players, which are: Turks (Mid East), Japanese (Far East), Polynesians (Australasia), Incas (South America), Americans (Guess Who?), Celts (Europe) and Bantus (Africa). As usual with Lew's variants, game balance is above average, so the game is definitely playable. There are no unusual rules, except that Lew suggests the Coastal Crawl should be allowed, though he doesn't explain what it is.

Obviously, in a game that covers the whole world in about 100 areas, these areas are fairly big relative to those in Regular. For example, the entire area of the normal Dippy map is covered by only 10 or so areas.

The diplomacy in this game should be quite interesting, since there several of the triangle situations like E/F/G and R/T/A in standard Dip. Morocco, for example, could be equally claimed by the Celts, Incas, Bantus and Turks, and in a game where supply centres are fairly scarce, the battle for ownership of each centre will be stiff.

Overall, this, like all games published in DW, is worth a try.

## RATINGS:

Balance - ++++++  
Clarity - ++++++  
Worth - +++++

SMALL WORLD DIPLOMACY // Fred C. Davis, Jr. // 7 or 8 // ?? // ?? // 47 // 74 // 27

According to my records, there is another variant by the same name, designed by Steven Tihor, so perhaps this one should be Small World II. Can anyone confirm this? ((It's coincidence, Der; the two games are wholly unrelated. -cvm))

In general this game is similar to Global (see preceding) in that the map covers the whole world, and movement is possible from one edge of the map to the other. The players in the game are similar also, except that Russia is added and Australasia is dropped for the 7-player version.

There is an optional eighth player, known as the Seapower Empire, which starts the game with England, Japan, Newfoundland and Sydney, and if that isn't one hell of a thinly-spread territory, what is? Fred freely admits that the Seapower player has his work cut out for him, even to survive, and that he is in a poor position in terms of play balance compared to the other players. But in a game where naval power counts, he is not entirely without assets.

Fred points out that only one supply centre is inaccessible by sea, so fleets will be important, especially since movement at sea can be very fast. For example, the map can be circumnavigated in only five moves around Antarctica.

I think it's a pity, however, that Australasia is not included as a player. The sea areas in the Pacific are really too big and empty; and smaller sea spaces, and another power having, say, Australia, New Zealand and Hawaii as its home bases would, I think, have been better than the Seapower Empire player.

## RATINGS:

Balance - ++++++  
Clarity - ++++++  
Worth - +++++

ECLIPTIC // Paul Willey // 5 // s18 // ?? // 35 // 130 areas

This game is a futuristic variant, based in our solar system in the 31st century. The various planets and their satellites become the supply centres, and the players are Earth, Mars,

Jupiter, Saturn and Uranus, all of which have become extensively colonized.

The unusual feature of this game is that the supply centres move. That is to say that the planets are rotating around the sun. Since the orbits are all of different duration, this results in a continually changing map, and this necessitates a lot of forward planning on the part of the players.

Since the map is changing all the time, it is really pointless to talk about play balance, but it is worth pointing out that, at the start of the game, no two players have the same number of units. Earth starts with a mere two, while Uranus has 6 and Mars, Jupiter and Saturn have 3, 4 and 5 respectively. Earth's small number of units is due apparently to lack of raw materials, but this is offset by her superior technology, which gives her the secret of faster-than-light drive, allowing her forces to move up to 3 spaces at a time. This secret can, however, be captured by the others.

There are also rules governing the use of missiles, which can travel up to 2 spaces, and completely destroy the spaces they explode in, making them impassable for 9 turns due to radio-activity.

Overall, this game is probably good fun for SF fans, and it is very well presented, with a clear set of rules. If you're not an SF fan, though, I doubt that you would enjoy it.

#### RATINGS:

Balance - ?  
Clarity - +++++++  
Worth - +++++

THE GREAT YEARS // Kedge Neuman // 6 // t18 //  
?? // 46 // 128 // 6

This is another of the host of Tolkien variants, but with a little difference. It really attempts to recreate the spirit of the "Lord of the Rings" saga. In addition to the armies (including double armies and triple armies) there are units representing all of the main leaders of Middle Earth. King Dain Ironfoot, King Brand, Theoden/Eomer, Gandalf, Galadriel/Celeborn, Faramir/Imrahil, Aragorn and the Nine Nazgul are all included.

Aragorn and Gandalf are controlled by player vote. They follow whichever moves are suggested by the most players. Both may "inspire" any army (except those of Mordor), and these armies then fight at +1. The other characters all operate similarly, but are each under the control of one player. Galadriel, for example, "inspires" Elf units to fight at +1, Faramir inspires Gondor, Theoden - Rohan, and so on. The nine Nazgul can each inspire one of Mordor's armies, which means he has more than enough to put one with each of the armies he starts with. The Nazgul, therefore, are more powerful than all the other in-

spirational units put together, which really negates any advantage these units may have given to the 'Forces of Good.'

These inspirational units, however, go to make a game which is probably a more entertaining simulation of the War of the Ring than most other Tolkien variants, which take no account of the personalities in the story.

Like all Tolkien variants, however, it falls down very badly on game balance. Mordor is made far too strong, and is as far as I can see unstoppable. Even if Rohan and Gondor could have raised enough forces to stop the sweep north, they are hampered by a special Double Army which travels around their lands (representing the forces of Saruman) capturing their centres, and by Mordor's northern forces in Moria, Mt. Gundabad and Dol Guldur, which can all be brought south.

As in the novels, the Elves, Dwarves and Hobbits of the North (with a few exceptions) play little part in the early war with Mordor, and are far more likely to be found squabbling among themselves for supremacy in the North.

Mordor will certainly win the game, with Rohan and Gondor coming way down the list, having lost everything.

After Mordor, second place will probably go to the Dwarves, or the Men/Hobbits, as they can expand in the north and steer clear of Mordor.

Overall, this game has more potential than most, and its attempts to introduce characterization and detail made me quite hopeful; but it falls flat simply because no thought was given to play balance. What is the fun in playing a Tolkien variant, if you know the Baddies are going to win every time?

In any Tolkien game, Mordor should be weakened to a reasonable level, even if this does decrease the realism. Otherwise the games are practically worthless.

#### RATINGS:

Balance - +  
Clarity - +++  
Worth - +++

GAME OF THE CLANS (SCOTTOMACY) // R. Wayne  
Hoheisel // 9 // s // m2 // 69 // 87 // 35

This game is a real delight for stabbers, since all of the nations are overlapping and spread out. Any player who allows himself to fall victim to a conspiracy could be almost wiped out in one game year.

The game is based in Scotland in the 15th century, the players being all the major clans of that era and the English. Each clan has 5 centres at the start of the game. One player, for example, has one in the very north, one in the very south, and three in the middle mixed among those of two other players. England, on the other hand, starts with all of his units

closely packed, and has a vastly superior military strength. This is offset to a large extent by the movement and supporting abilities of the English fleets. In fact, in the only game I played, England was the first one out despite his superiority.

In the game the clans are not considered to be naval powers, and as such do not have the skills needed to build fleets. Instead, they can make Boat Bunches, which are capable of transporting armies over the seas, but which have no combat ability of their own. They do not require supply centres to support them.

The game is not ideally balanced, though with good diplomacy anyone could still win. Overall, this is a good and very enjoyable game, and I recommend it.

#### RATINGS:

Balance - +++++  
Clarity - +++++  
Worth - ++++++

## VARIANT DESIGN

by  
LEWIS  
PULSIPHER

It should be mentioned from time to time that the occasional variant package or booklet does stay in print. At the moment, the only such known to me is my own SF&F VARIANT PACKAGE, from my brother Jim Pulsipher, 1318 S. Finley Rd., Apt. 10, Lombard, Illinois 60148. Price \$2.25. Maybe if we mention this from time to time, and it sells, others will be encouraged to reprint other variant packages or compile new ones.

Since the appearance of anything in DIPLOMACY WORLD gives it an aura of legitimacy, however undeserved, I must remark upon the farcical awards announced in the last issue. I can only repeat what I said when this scheme was devised (DW 12). Diplomacy awards schemes, no matter how well organized, have been failures and sometimes farces in the past (e.g. the Johnny/Calahamer Awards which were finally abandoned by IDA after several reforms had been tried. The "DVC" variant awards scheme not only suffers from the common difficulties, it is backed by no organization worthy of the name, is isolated from the hobby community (witness a single person from outside the committee making any nominations), and includes several narrowly prejudiced people on an altogether unrepresentative selection panel. This is not to say that anything is necessarily wrong with the winners. Many certainly deserve a good word. But as it now stands this farce does no good and is a discredit to all directly concerned (and I do not mean the winners). For more background, read the variants section of DW 13.

## DIALOGUE

ON VON METZKE'S PLOT TO  
TAKE OVER THE WORLD....  
by LEWIS PULSIPHER

"\*BANG\* -Thud- While Conrad drags the body away...." (DW 16, p.17)

I was in the dungeon reading DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS 'zines when I heard a cry from my Alter Ego, who'd just retrieved the mail.

"Puls, Puls, look at this. Von Metzke and his lackeys have killed somebody!"

I rushed upstairs. "What? What are you talking about, Alter?"

"It's here in DW...why, it looks like they're pretending it was you, Puls."

"But we're both still here...who then? Omigod, they mention Walt - you don't think..."

"Well, Walt and you are almost the same height, and how many 6½ footers are there in the hobby?"

"But Alter, I'm two inches taller, six or seven years younger, have a moustache...."

"They'd be shooting from the back."

"No, not even Sacks and Heuer can miss their mark that badly."

"Perhaps so, Puls. But how about this: isn't it strange how Walt turns everything over to von Metzke, without even a word this issue? Anyone could do that archives biz. And former enemies like Sacks and von Metzke are now bosom buddies...."

"No, no, Alter, this is silly - "

"And when was the last time you heard from Walt, eh?"

"Why, months ago!"

"Yeah. It's the perfect crime to begin a takeover of the hobby. Von Metzke knocks off Walt and pretends it was you to deflect suspicion. Then he pretends Walt gave him control of DW. But you know Walt wouldn't have anything to do with Sacks and Heuer. Look at the cover. That beanpole is laughing at the hoodwinked readers while he buries poor Walt. The readers will think it's just a joke. And you know von Metzke is insanely jealous of anyone nearly as tall as he is."

"Right. Walt is - was - 6'5". I'm 6'7". Von Metzke is 6'8". Now that Walt's gone, I must be at the top of the death list."

"But now we know enough to be careful, Puls. Remember, DW has no influence in British Dip-fandom. Most of 'em don't even know what it is. He's pulled the takeover in North America by joining forces with his worst enemy, Sacks, but even this DVC-WVA business won't matter here because so many of us Europeans are persona non grata with DVC."

"Yes, and he has no influence over me anyway; I'm a D&D player, not a Diplomacy player. But we'll have to keep your role a secret."

"That I write all the Dip stuff now? I'm not worried. How do you kill an Alter Ego?"  
"But Alter, what can we do to save Dippydom? Von Metzke's insidious plot has nearly succeeded."

"It has succeeded. All we can do is tell people about it, but you know they won't believe us. They're like sheep, believing anything written by the DW editor."

"Now be charitable, Alter. They aren't as bad as D&D fans."

"That's not saying much. Anyway, I know what to do now, Puls. You take care of D&D, I'll take care of Diplomacy."

"Just remember, Alter, drop any strange packages we receive into a bucket of water before you open them - especially if they tick."

(With apologies to Dick Geis)

-----  
The sinister carriage drawn by the not-so-sinister GMC tow truck (have you tried renting horses lately?) stopped in front of the mysterious windowless building in the arcane town of Jamul, California, and the figure that alighted was either a dwarf or was doing the duck walk. Moving affectedly to the door, he punched the bell and was shortly rewarded with the attendance of a man in a laboratory smock.

"Good evening," growled the visitor. "I have come to see about your new chemical for killing an Alter Ego."

"You're in luck," smiled the man in the smock. "We've just had a new shipment from our developer in England...."

## VARIANT INFORMATION

by ROBERT SACKS and RAYMOND E. HEUER

As you might guess, DIPLOMACY WORLD is unlike your ordinary newspaper, or even unlike your ordinary Diplomacy 'zine, in that there is no coordination between various columnists and writers. This results in the unusual situation that one writer appears to say is heartily disagreed with by another writer - of course we may actually be disagreeing with the typist! Last issue (17) gave a good deal for thought on variants that is worth responding to, so....

In his article on ethics, Allan Calhamer quotes Jonathan Palfrey as saying, "The idea of making Karma Diplomacy a variant strikes me as a very good one, and seems to provide a solution which should be satisfactory to all parties.... People who wanted to try playing with binding agreements would be able to do so with improved security and without committing themselves to playing that way in all their games." Calhamer then went on to say, "Actually, a gamesmaster would be crazy to attempt to enforce agreements by rule, since he has no way of telling what the agreement actually was. Now with all re-

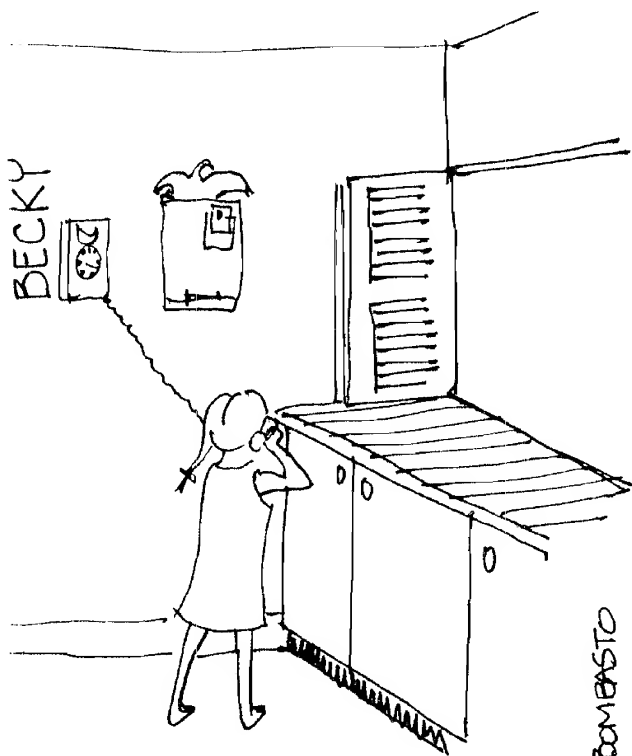
spect, my neighbor made more sense this morning when he expressed disbelief at playing Diplomacy by mail. Diplomacy gamesmasters are in the habit of applying orders according to rules. If a variant were to state that one or more players could bind their orders according to statements submitted with prior orders, then the only difficulty the gamesmaster would face would be the storage and application of such statements. Some variants already have rules that state that certain attacks are disallowed or compelled, or that under certain circumstances orders by the gamesmaster or other players are to be used instead, and if you check carefully enough you might note that the rules of dislodgment, cutting support, and removals in regular Diplomacy contain such provisions. As a variant, Karma would make sense, almost as much as the variant proposed by George Phillies to literally enforce the rulebook provision, "an order by one country which supports an attack by another country on a space occupied by one of the first country's units does not permit a move dislodging that unit, but may be valid for other purposes." To my knowledge, no gamesmaster enforces that provision literally - that would be crazy.

Somehow, the activities for which Dick Vedder won the award for General Contribution to Variants were omitted - he was cited for his work on variant banks, statistics and ratings, design, and the IDA variant committee. Also, Charles Sharp was gamesmaster, editor and publisher of the Slobinopolit Zhurnal simultaneously and continuously for an extended period of time, and Ontario should have been credited with .14 of a winner. As of January 1978, the 1977 Variant Awards panel consists in Greg Costikyan, Fred Davis, Ray Heuer, Robert Sacks, and David Schwartz, with a secretary still unnamed, so nominations should be sent to Robert Sacks, 4861 Broadway, Apt. 5-V, New York, NY 10034, for the time being.

In his column, Der Garvey referred people to a single variant bank - Walter Luc Haas' WORLD VARIANT BANK. It should have been mentioned that there are three other reputable variant banks handling different geographic areas: THE AUSTRALIAN VARIANT BANK, Larry Dunning, 46 Holmesdale Road, West Midland, Perth 6056, Western Australia; WORLD VARIANT BANK, NORTH AMERICAN BRANCH, Dave Kadlecsek, 1447 Sierra Creek Way, San Jose, California 95132; (BRITISH) NATIONAL GAMES CLUB VARIANT BANK, Hartley Patterson, 'Finches,' 7 Cambridge Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks., HP9 1HW, U.K. If you have any problems with any of the four Variant Banks, please write either to Robert Sacks (above) or to Ray Heuer (162-10 87th Road, Jamaica, NY 11432) who have an interest in such things.

The final point raised in the issue was not by a columnist, but by a letter writer, Thomas

Butcher. His political views are widely shared by (among others) people who have deliberately destroyed the organizations which those who did not share these views believed to be potentially hobby-wide and the best that could be attained, so he should understand that the many hobbyists who were hurt by these destructions will not soon cooperate with those who share his views. But the point that needs answering is his request for a standard set of variants. A variant is played because people want to play it - it is interesting. There are extant five-, six-, eight- and nine-player variants which may suit the needs as stated, some of which have been published in DIPLOMACY WORLD (the Cline 9-Man variant is a classic), even though some have special rules of the type disdained. If all that is desired is a game that can be played with fewer players, simply play Diplomacy (or, for eight, Cline 9-Man) with the country (or countries) not to be played picked at random and left standing in civil disorder. This has the benefit of being novel - diplomacy, strategy and tactics when a random power is missing are different from both the game with all players present and each of the other games with missing players.



I DON'T THINK DADDY WOULD  
LIKE ME TO READ YOU ALL  
THE MOVES . . . . . WHAT . . . . OH,  
GEE, WHAT KIND OF PONY?

# SOOPER ENGLAND!

by  
RICHARD  
NASH

Noble, patriotic England is my favourite country on the board, just above Turkey. Isolated by sea from the rest of the world, it is one of the strongest countries on the board after 1901 builds are over. And yet it has only won a small portion of the games finished to date. Why? General opinion is that it's because England goes for Russia too often. England/France almost never come first and second together because of this. But I say bilge to the Russian paradox!

Let's start from the beginning. The normal western split is that two powers ally against the third. Whom should England go for? Take France first. Initially France gets 2 or 3 builds in 1901, and after that she is done. She must look to England, Germany or Italy for more centres. So an alliance against Germany looks good. Assume it happens. You must attack in 1901 to have a chance of a quick kill on the strong German centre, and when you do, bang goes cooperation up north against Russia and you lose Norway. So is an alliance with France out? We shall see.

Germany offers little hope. Apart from cooperation up north, and a good partner against France, after the latter has gone then both sides attack each other. It always happens, just one of those things. By the time they are through with each other, one of the eastern powers has come through to win the game.

So what is the option left for England? Basically it consists of non-aggression among the three countries themselves: England to head for Russia, France to head for the Mediterranean and Germany to assist both while taking Russia/Italy apart. The strategy is a gem. England and France are left unmolested. France gets into the Med. early and removes Italy before it gets strong; England heads into the Barents and takes St. Pete and Moscow while Germany takes Sweden. An alliance with Turkey ensures that Russia is out, and England is then set for the removal of his two rivals in the west - Germany and France.

The England-Turkey relationship is the basis of any game. While England secures the west and Turkey/Austria secure the east, upon meeting in Moscow the time is struck for a stab. The predominance of fleets which England has allows swift occupation of Sweden and Denmark, followed by a move into the Baltic and removal of Kiel, Berlin, etc. France will be so preoccupied in the Med. that she has no



units to defend the homeland. By this time Turkey will have cut Italy/Austria in two, and both England and Turkey have a clear field to victory.

It doesn't actually matter which Balkan power comes out on top, in reality. Were Austria to have emerged triumphant, then an England-Austria alliance would have the same effect. The crux of the strategy is the long-term aim of alliance with the surviving Balkan power.

One other point in the strategy is its versatility. It can be changed so that Germany helps you remove France before you stab him, or France helps you remove Germany only after you have consolidated your hold in Scandinavia and can move in on Denmark and Kiel. The policy is that you must NOT attack one of them until Russia is on the way out, and France is in the Mediterranean. Otherwise one of the Balkan powers will win the game. At all times in the early stages remember that England with 4 units is equal to Germany with 5 and France with 6 in offensive/defensive capability. Getting Norway in 1901, with St. Pete and Sweden and possibly Moscow in 1902, leaves you with a sound base for taking Denmark and Kiel and Holland the following year and then maneuvering

your forces in on France in 1904-5.

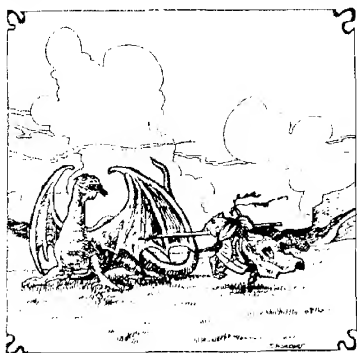
At all costs you must avoid the possibility of a French-German alliance. If that happens, then you must get the help of Italy and Russia against them. The latter should be allies anyway (until you stab him!), so it should be easy enough to get their help in stopping the emergence of a strong western power. For if France and Germany ally, all you can aim for is second or third. One of the Balkan powers is bound to win.

The best opening moves are: F Edi-Nwg, F Lon-Nth and A Lvp-Yor. If France stabs via English Channel, then Yorkshire can be used to protect London, leaving the fleets free to take Norway and possibly Belgium (if France and Germany stood each other out of Burgundy). Otherwise convoy via North Sea to Norway, move F Nwg-Bar and build Fleet London. In spring 1902 head for North Sea and Norwegian, then to Skagerrak and Sweden/Denmark in 1902/3.

Overall, England should win many games if played properly. Never move F Lon-Eng unless you are leaving Russia alone and going for Belgium by an obscure pact with Germany, since it is pointless against France in the early stages. And always watch your rear with a build of Fleet Liverpool sometime.

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# LIFE AFTER THE BOARDMAN NUMBERS

by DOUGLAS BEYERLEIN

Yes, it is possible to survive a stint as Boardman Number Custodian. But it isn't easy. When I transferred the Boardman Numbers to Cal White on 1 November 1977 I became the first BNC to voluntarily initiate a transfer of this job since Charles Wells turned it over to John Koning in 1968. I have held the job for three years and have assigned more Boardman Numbers to new games and reported more finished games than any other custodian in the history of the hobby. Impressive? Hell yes, but I guarantee that I am enjoying the freedom of retirement far more than the glory and drudgery of the work as BNC.

But what next? At age 27 and after eleven years in this crazy hobby, what new goals should I set? Good question, and one that if put in the proper perspective may affect more than just myself. I have given this much thought and have compiled a list of worthwhile hobby projects. Briefly, these are:

1. a study of what Diplomacy organizations can and cannot do to help the hobby and the individual player,
2. establishment of a computerized data bank to record finished postal Diplomacy games and player and gamesmaster achievements, and
3. collection of select articles that represent the great variety of interests and views that make up the postal Diplomacy hobby.

As outlined above, these three proposed hobby projects are sufficiently vague to cover a lot of ground. It is very unlikely that an individual can successfully tackle any one of these projects. But there is no reason why a segment of one cannot be handled by an individual or a group. Thus, it is worthwhile to break these projects down into manageable components. Lets start with the first one.

What is the need for a Diplomacy organization? What can it do that an individual cannot? These are all questions that have been asked about Diplomacy organizations since they were first proposed in the mid 1960s. And these are not easy questions to answer. Both the International Diplomacy Association (based in the United States) and the National Games Club (founded in the United Kingdom) at times find it difficult to solve problems that arise. One of the reasons for this difficulty lies in defining their role in the hobby. A study involving all of the leaders of the different organizations can go a long way in answering these questions and defining an organization's purpose in the hobby. One way of conducting such a study would be to run a discussion zine oriented to this

single subject. I did something in this vein with my zine, California Reports, in the early 1970s on the subject of rating systems. It worked quite well. Handled in the correct manner the idea can work here.

The second proposed project is to establish a Diplomacy data bank. Its purpose is to collect and compile in one place a complete record of postal Diplomacy games played in the hobby. In addition, it can be the basis for player rating systems and player and gamesmaster achievement records. All of the necessary data is available -- the only problem is collecting it into one accessible place. The one accessible place that has the most versatility for multiple use is computer storage on either disk or tape. I have experimented with placing finished game reports on computer disk during the end of my BNC tenure. It was no more difficult than typing the information on a typewriter. The only real problem with a computer data bank is getting free or inexpensive computer time to establish and use the bank. But I bet that there are at least a few of us (including myself) who have the access and the interest to establish such a data bank. The first step in building a data bank is to collect interested participants and formulate data collection standards. Once that much is achieved then the project is well on its way to completion.

The third idea is to collect a selection of

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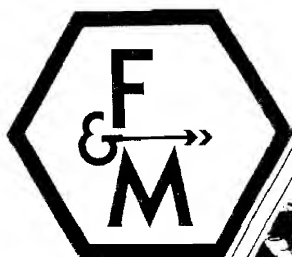
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articles on various aspects of the postal Diplomacy hobby. These articles can be assembled into a book-like publication or a super hand-book. And with a seven year or greater collection of articles from numerous zines there is plenty of material available. Some of that material is now being used by Mark Berch in his zine, Diplomacy Digest, but a more permanent collection of material is necessary. As to who will do the collecting and publishing of this material, that will depend on who has the interest, time, money, and, most important, knowledge. This might be an idea for Avalon Hill to look into.

These projects are all things I would like to work on. I may eventually tackle them all, but it won't be this year or the next. Probably the project that I will first spend some time on is working out the format for a computer data bank. If any of you are also interested in this project please contact me (Doug Beyerlein, 640

College Ave., Menlo Park, CA 94025). The other projects are longer range goals for me, but obviously there are others who are capable of getting these projects started and seeing them through to completion.

I would like to assist as much as I can in these other projects even though I don't have the time to get actively involved. But I will do the next best thing by acting as a clearing-house for individuals to contact others likewise interested in helping on one of the above projects. So if you are interested in participating in some way in any of the projects just drop me a card explaining what you would like to do or work on. I will keep it in a file and pass the information on to anyone else enquiring about the same project. It is then up to you to get together and decide how to approach the project and handle the tasks involved. It sounds simple, but who knows? Maybe by working together we can all get a little more enjoyment out of this hobby. It is worth a try.



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# NEWS FROM THE CLASSICAL BOARD

by MICHEL LIESNARD

Things are changing rapidly on the Belgian Diplomacy scene. The game, in its Philmar/Ariel commercial version, is now available from quite any toy shop of the Kingdom, with French and Dutch translations of the rulebook, the former by myself and the latter by Joseph Vanden Borre. Both new rulebooks contain a comprehensive list of the English abbreviations used in postal play, plus a list of either their French or Dutch counterparts. Thanks to us Belgian language fanatics, those fleets in Brest and London are now able to stand each other off in Kan (Het Kanaal) or Man (La Manche), and are restricted to good old English Channel no longer....

Kamlag, the importers, have also accepted to include a French flyer in the boxes (with a Dutch translation at the end of Vanden Borre's text), which mentions several European 'zines (Haas' BUMM, Jonsson's POLAR KNIGHT, Prevot's VORTIGERN) and a certain DIPLOMACY WORLD for the attention of those who would be looking for a first game by mail.

The same Kamlag, interested in wargames after the Gettysburg Club's convention of last April, are also putting several other good games on the national market, such as Kingmaker, Decline and Fall, and Seastrike, all translated into French by the ubiquitous Michel Liesnard.

With regard to clubs, the Gettysburg and International Wargames Group have merged into a new entity proudly named THE INTERNATIONAL CO-SIM GROUP, or ICG, the wedding presents including the numerous members of the former IWG and the local, conceded to the GETTYSBURG by the Municipality of Anderlecht (of which the Mayor, M. Henri Simonet, appears to be a Diplomacy freak, perhaps because he is also Belgium's Foreign Minister).

The CLUB DES LUDOPHILES goes on to be alive and well in Brussels, but the Flemish ANCIENT BATTLEGAMING CLUB (ABC) is probably suffering from its first schism, with Kris Doms (former ABC president) announcing the birth of the FLEMISH MINIATURE WARFARE GROUP in Antwerp. If those Dutch-speakers go on that way, "Minia-ture" will become the appropriate term soon, I say.

As a consequence of the merger leading to the ICG, Joseph Vanden Borre has folded his fanzine GETTYSBURG, and Douglas Mills' AIDE DE CAMP is now the only official magazine of the association. Mills, who has moved back to barbaric England after seven years in sybaritic Belgium, will go on publishing it from the Manchester area but does not intend to make it a "British" 'zine since three-fourths of his

readers are Continental Europeans, with a slight majority of Belgian French-speakers. ADC is currently running 7 Diplomacy games (3 regular, 1 Treachery, 1 Air Dip. II, 1 Hyborean and 1 Lima-V), and has 4 games open at the present time, which can't be considered bad for a 'zine with only seven issues out up to now.

GETTYSNEWS, my own Dippy and political mess thing, has reached its 15th issue (Yes Sir, there was an Issue 6.5!), with 3 variant games in it (Sacred Rhino, Balarna-II, Lima-IV) and a newborn subzine, ZINNEKE, carrying a genuine Bruxellisme-III game.

Finally, Rudi Geudens, the tin soldier from Sint-Niklaas, has taken over ABC's SARISSA, while Kris Doms is announcing his own Antwerp miniature warfare magazine for soon. And no information is yet available about Mark Fish-back's RASPUTIN, which might well be the 'zine that never was....

Two large conventions are planned for 1978. The ICG organizes a European meeting in Waterloo (why not?) on June 24 and 25, and the whole wargaming community of Belgium will set up its own program during EuroCon IV, the fourth European S-F Con, to take place at the Free University of Brussels in November 1978.

In the meantime, the local professional press has become interested in Diplomacy and wargaming too. Articles in PANORAMA and FEMMES D'AUJOURD'HUI will have been published by the time this article reaches you, and the monthly PLAY PEOPLE appointed me as their Diplomacy editor in late December.

To end up: Local games appear on the market together with translations of foreign products. Charles Turquin (military correspondent of the weekly POURQUOI PAS?) is on the point of issuing his Charge (Napoleonic tactical warfare) and polishing his Golden Spurs and Brussels 1830, while a certain Michel Liesnard is designing a fantasy strategic game for Malpertuis, a local bookshop specializing in S-F and related things.

## ADDRESSES:

Questions, etc., about the ICG, AIDE DE CAMP, the Waterloo Con, should be directed to Douglas P. Mills, 210 Bramhall Lane South, Bramhall, Stockport, Cheshire, U.K.

Questions, etc., about GETTYSNEWS to Michel Liesnard, Avenue de Tervueren 415, B-1150 Brussels, Belgium.

Questions, etc., about the ABC and SARISSA to Rudi Geudens, Dendermondse Stwg 10, B-2700 Sint-Niklaas, Belgium.

Questions, etc., about the Flemish Miniature Warfare Group to Kris Doms, Eddegemse Stwg 77, B-2550 Kontich, Belgium.

Questions, etc., about the CLUB DES LUDOPHILES to Alain Serneels, Avenue de la Toison d'Or 28, B-1060 Brussels, Belgium.

# ITALY:

## I CAME, I SAW...

by ADAM GRUEN

Many players groan when they learn that they have received Italy in a Diplomacy game. True, Italy never really had a stable government in its history, with the exception of Mussolini's regime from 1932 to 1943, but this matters little to a Diplomacy enthusiast, unless you are an historical gamer with little care for such things as "winning" and "maneuvering."

Italy is a fun country to play. Strategically, it is much like England, relying on fleets more than armies in the initial stages of the game. However, Italy is weakened by two geographical considerations which do not trouble England: First, and foremost, it does have land provinces, which can be invaded; and second, it lies directly between France and Austria, or, in the later stages of the game, between an Eastern Bloc and a Western Bloc. For the former, the Italian player must rely on his two armies which start in Venice and Rome. For the latter, the Italian player must rely on his tongue and the personalities of the other players.

Winning as Italy isn't so easy, and usually infrequent. Perhaps, then, the title of this article might be, "How to play as well as possible without losing." Caesar may have had a lot of Europe, but you must have tact, guile, patience, and units when you need them. This article divides naturally into two main subjects: dealing with France and Austria, and later Turkey; plus hints on the middle and end games.

### THEME 1: FRANCE AND ENGLAND

Italy has the luxury of sitting on the proverbial fence with France for one, possibly two years. A non-aggression pact is easy to come by, which usually means a buffer zone in Piedmont. Italy should realize right off the bat that attacking France in 1901 is a useless gesture which will limit potential later on. Move A VEN-PIE only as a last resort, or, as will be discussed later on, in conjunction with Germany.

Next, assuming a hands-off-Piedmont pact, the Italian player must nail down a French promise not to build F MAR. The French player can generally avoid this by building A MAR, which shouldn't placate the Italians too much, but a French build of F MAR is inexcusable. There are three places it can go, two of which are no good for Italy: SPA SC, LYO or PIE.

The latter two are warnings that France is going to attack; the former is okay only if England is at war with France.

The key to Italian-French relationships is to see what is happening up north with England. If England and Germany attack France, then the Italian player has two choices, both of which are trouble later on in the game: Help France, or stab her.

The former is the more passive of the two. France will beg for non-aggression, which means essentially that the French player can throw five units against the Anglo-German assault. This is fine for Italy as it provides a safe wall to his back when dealing with Austria and/or Turkey. Not hitting France will, however, incense the English and Germans to a degree that, should they finish off France, you can bet the Italian boots Italy will be the next target.

Stabbing France means giving up designs on Austria or Turkey for the next two years, until 1903 or even 1904. It also means getting Marseilles, or Spain, or - if one is lucky - both. France will be finished, but therein lies the rub; with the "plug pulled," there is nothing to stop England and Germany from attacking Italy next. Remember, Munich is but a Tyrolia away from Italy! Watching Russia will help determine the situation; if Russia fights Germany and/or England, then Italy may breathe slightly easier. Hopefully, England and Germany will fight each other and let the Italian player alone - it might even be a good idea to get them to fight each other. (Promising centers you don't own is an effective method.)

If England and France are allied, then Italy again has two choices: Help Germany, or ignore the whole thing. The former implies an attack against France, while the latter means keeping the non-aggression pact with that country. This is probably the best thing that could happen for Italy early in the game, as it means Franco-English attention will be diverted from Italy long enough to build up a power base. In the long run, it means ruin for Italy unless he can ally with Russia/Turkey, since England will steamroll up north while France plows through the south, which means first plowing through Italy.

A Franco-German alliance is bad for Italian interests. It means essentially that after England, Sunny Italy is next to go. An effective counter-measure can be taken by allying with Austria, letting her guide the war efforts by guarding Italy with armies, while you guard Austria with fleets. However, there is Turkey to deal with; on the one hand, a Russo-Turkish alliance means that Austria will get hit hard, and that's bad for keeping out the Franco-Germanic hordes; on the other hand, a Russo-Turkish war means that England will get little help from Russia, and that means England gets finished

off quickly, which is also bad for Italy.

What to do, then? Why, attack Turkey, of course.

## THEME 2: AUSTRIA AND TURKEY

Italy and Austria have a big problem. Venice and Trieste border on each other, which wouldn't be so bad except that they are both home supply centers. Austria's worries are aggravated by the fact that the loss of Trieste cuts off her only port in which to build fleets.

Italy must decide what to do about Austria, provided Austria doesn't move openly against Italy. Attacking Austria can be accomplished by the direct method (A VEN-TRI, A ROM-VEN, F NAP-ION) or the indirect method (A VEN-TYO, A ROM-VEN, F NAP-ION followed by A TYO S A VEN-TRI, F ION-GRE or TUN). The indirect method is also a good defense against an Austrian blitz.

I suggest making peace, not war. One possibility is A VEN H, A ROM-TUS, F NAP-ION. This is not as good as the "Lepanto" opening, which is A VEN H, A ROM-APU, F NAP-ION. Why? Simply because A APU can still support A VEN if necessary while in addition it can convoy to all sorts of interesting places, like TUN, GRE or ALB. A TUS does not have this possibility.

An interesting idea is the delayed stab, which works only in conjunction with Russia. In S.01, A VEN H, A ROM-APU, F NAP-ION, while Russia moves A WAR-GAL. In F.01, A VEN-TRI, A APU C to ALB. Austria cannot defend everything at once, and, while Italy only gets one build, this setup provides for further penetration into SER and/or GRE.

Getting back to the "Lepanto," which is anti-Turkish, the Italian player builds F NAP. In S.02, A TUN H, A VEN H, F ION-EAS, F NAP-ION. In F.02, A TUN C to SYR, A VEN H. This means that the Turks will lose SMY, or GRE, and most likely BUL. This attack can only work with Austrian assistance, with a chance of success if Russia helps.

Another Italo-Austrian possibility is a rare opening known as the "Key Opening." In S.01, A VEN-TRI, A ROM-VEN, F NAP-ION. Meanwhile, Austria does a lot of screaming, having played F TRI-ALB, A BUD-SER, A VIE-BUD. However, in F.01, A TRI-SER!, F ION-TUN, A VEN H. Meanwhile Austria plays A SER-GRE, F ALB S A SER-GRE, A BUD H. This is an effective attack against Turkey because Austria can swing his fleet into play, and the two armies can hit BUL. The Italians get two builds and can watch out for France at the same time.

If there is animosity between Italy and Austria, then the Italians must decide with whom they wish to ally, Russia or Turkey. An alliance with Russia is preferable if France and Germany are allied or if England and Germany are allied. If France and England are allied, it might be best to ally with Turkey, for then

Turkey can hit Russia, and a solid Italian/Turkish like can be built against the Western Bloc. If the Russians and Turks are allied, then don't hit Austria! All that will do is get rid of the plug, and you'll get the Turkish Bath instead.

## OPENINGS AND STRATEGIES:

As is traditional, I shall list what I believe to be the standard openings for Italy. However, because of the relatively limited number of beginning combinations, the gist of this section will deal with what can be done after S.01.

### I. ANTI-FRENCH OPENINGS

Plan Turin: A VEN-PIE, A ROM-TUS, F NAP-ION.  
Plan Genoa: A VEN-PIE, A ROM-VEN, F NAP-TYN.  
Plan Tunis: A VEN-PIE, A ROM-APU, F NAP-ION.  
Plan Milan: A VEN H, A ROM-TUS, F NAP-ION.

### II. ANTI-AUSTRIAN OPENINGS

Plan Trieste: A VEN-TRI, A ROM-VEN, F NAP-ION.  
Plan Isonzo: A VEN-TYO, A ROM-VEN, F NAP-ION.  
Plan Albania: A VEN H, A ROM-APU, F NAP-ION.

### III. ANTI-TURKISH OPENINGS

Plan Lepanto: A VEN H, A ROM-APU, F NAP-ION.  
Plan Key: A VEN-TRI, A ROM-APU, F NAP-ION.

### IV. FALL 1901 AND THEREAFTER

Plan Turin: The idea was to make sure that Piedmont could be taken by Fall 1901. If France moved A MAR-PIE, the standoff would not have sent A TUS back to ROM as in Plan Genoa. If so, then A TUS-PIE S by A VEN, while F ION-TUN. A Fleet should be built in Naples, followed by F TUN-WES, F NAP-TYN, A PIE-MAR, A VEN H. In F.02, F WES S F TYN-LYO. By S.03 MAR could fall, or SPA.

Plan Genoa: Essentially the same as Plan Turin, except this one is less trusting of Austria and assumes that France will not move A MAR-PIE. Meanwhile, Italy could move F TYN-TUN for the build, or F TYN-WES/LYO to attack France.

Plan Tunis: Acts as defense against A MAR-PIE while setting up a convoy to TUN with A APU. Optionally, A ROM can hold and be convoyed to TUN by F TYN, thus setting up a quick attack against France, but leaving Italy wide open. After building F NAP, then F NAP-TYN, F ION-TUN, A TUN-NAF, with eventual attack against France. (Or, F TYN-WES, F NAP-TYN, A TUN-NAF.)  
Plan Milan: Sets up A TUS-PIE S by VEN, while F NAP goes for TUN. Has advantage of seeing if France moved to PIE; if Austria stabs you, it may be used as defense of VEN.

Plan Trieste: In F.01, A VEN S TRI, A TRI H (or S RUS A GAL-VIE), F ION-TUN or GRE. The former is preferable if Austria cannot retake TRI, but otherwise GRE is a worthwhile target. Build F NAP and A ROM, then pivot about TRI, eventually

seeping into Austria, while F TUN S F NAP-ION.  
Plan Isonzo: Sets up A TYO S A VEN-TRI, while F ION-TUN. Has double advantage of standoff in TYO should A VIE-TYO in S.01, and does not risk standoff in TRI should F TRI have held or A VIE-TRI. After fall of TRI, same as above.

Plan Albania: Same as Lepanto with one major difference. In F.01 A VEN-TRI, while A APU C to ALB (or GRE, depending upon whether F TRI moved to ALB). A ALB can S A TRI and block F GRE from coming back to help.

Plan Lepanto: As explained in article, A APU-TUN, then in S.02, F NAP-ION, F ION-EAS, then A TUN C to SYR. In S.03, A SYR-SMY S by F EAS, while F ION-AEG. Optionally, F ION-AEG, F EAS S A SYR, with a 3-1 on SMY by F.03.

Plan Key: Also explained in article. Followed up by A SER S A GRE-BUL, while Austrian F ALB-GRE. In F.02, A SER-GRE, F ION-EAS, while F GRE-AEG, and Austrians take SER while Italy gets GRE. It is important to trade centers early, as things can get fouled up later on.

#### Variations on the Theme

Plan Turin: F NAP-TYN, followed by F TYN C



A PUS-TUN. France can then be hit by S.03, and EPA is under attack by F.02.

Plan Isonzo: A TYO-MUN, A VEN-TYO coupled with Austrian A VIE-BOH. Munich then falls in probable conjunction with Russia/France/England.

Plan Key: A VEN-TRI, A APU-GRE C by F ION. Thus Austria gets no builds and Italy gets two, with a solid bulwark in the Balkans and the probable fall of Austria in two years. However, this is extremely nasty and will probably permanently brand you as a no-Key Italian player.

#### V. THE MIDDLE AND END GAME

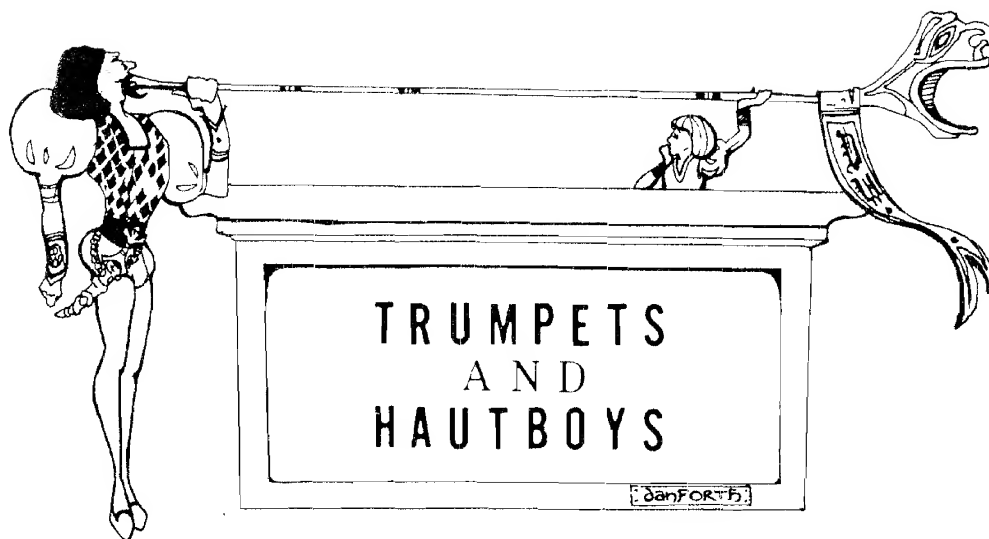
Italy is the focus point between the Eastern and Western Blocs. Italy is really the seventh country, for while France/England/Germany are concerned mainly with one another, the the same goes for Turkey/Austria/Russia, Italy is neither here no there. Italy must constantly see what is happening in other theatres and plan accordingly. Following is a chart which lists possible alliances and whether Italy should ally with the country in question. A question mark indicates that the situation depends upon such variables as the experience of the players, etc.

| BLOC      | AUS | ENG | FRA | GER | RUS | TUR |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| E/F v G   | N   | Y   | Y?  | N?  | Y   | Y   |
| E/G v F   | N?  | Y   | Y?  | Y   | Y   | N   |
| F/G v E   | Y   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y   | N   |
| F/R v G/E | N   | N   | Y   | N   | Y   | Y   |
| F/G v R/E | Y   | N   | Y   | Y   | N?  | N   |
| R/A v T   | Y   | N?  | Y   | Y?  | Y   | Y   |
| R/T v A   | Y?  | Y   | N?  | Y   | N?  | N   |
| A/T v R   | Y?  | Y   | N?  | Y   | Y?  | N?  |
| F v I     | Y   | Y   | N   | Y   | Y   | Y   |
| A v I     | N   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   |
| A/F v I   | N   | Y!  | N   | Y!! | Y!  | Y!  |

This is generally a good chart to work by, though it really depends upon the situation. In general, keeping your allies moving away from you is best. Italy is in a dangerous position if it allies with England and Germany against France, or with Russia and Turkey against Austria. In both cases, your allies are headed towards you. Italy is in a good position because it can maneuver diplomatically in the middle, as well as strategically. Italian forces can shift very rapidly from one sector of the front to another, but the key here is the Ionian Sea. If the Italian player loses control of ION, he must at all costs attempt to take it back. The ION is almost worth a center in itself.

With luck, Italy can be up to about 3 centers by F.06. By then, the Italian player should start thinking about allying with a strong Bloc and getting centers for itself. Should a Bloc attempt to move through Italy, the Italian player must reverse position and attempt a stalemate line.

Until next time, then, when DW presents GHOD SAVE THE TSAR!...



1. WHY NEWS ITEMS IN DIPLOMACY WORLD ARE NUMBERED (cf. DW 16: "6. Conrad von Metzke, the editor of the miasma you're now reading, is looking for a good explanation for why all these largely unrelated news items are numbered...."): There is a simple and straightforward answer to the question posed in Item 6, and that is that it is far more convenient to refer to Item 6 than to "Conrad's question why news items are numbered." In general, there is a great advantage to being able to refer to an entire item by number. For other examples in that same issue, one could refer to Item 9 as a real clunker or Item 18 as a superb example of journalism. (For those of you who find this justification questionable, why don't you ask why the Boardman Numbers are used to number Diplomacy games.) From this we can plainly see that the numbering of news items is, in and of itself, a major service to the hobby, and should be regularized and expanded, not eliminated. Such an expanded service would be of great assistance since the custodian of these numbers can be expected to refuse to give numbers to items not actually news, or not truthful. In addition, such a custodianship will provide an additional incitement to feuds and takeover attempts!

There is a subsidiary answer. Numbering the items reinforces the importance attributed to the items by the sequence in which they appear. Now this reason should not be underestimated in its importance. If anyone really believes that items have appeared in the news section in their actual order of importance, (s)he is more gullible than Conrad was when he accepted the editorship of DW.

Finally, items are numbered to indicate that they are separate items. This is a major reason. There have been incidents where a single news item has received more than one number so as to persuade the readership that there was more news than there was, or that the news was more im-

portant than it was. This is a very important editorial prerogative which can also be used in the opposite manner - when the editor feels that there are too many items on a given topic, he can omit a few of them.

In sum, the numbering of news items is an important editorial function. It is a major part of the power of an editor to mold the news. It says something about Conrad for even considering eliminating it.

-- Robert E. Sacks

((Applications are now being accepted for the position of News Items Custodian, the search being concentrated in areas that have high populations of former Prussian librarians so as to get the most service possible from these new numbers.))

2. It's about time to start considering your options for DipCon 1978, which is almost upon us. This year's convention will be held the weekend of June 30, on the campus of California State University, Northridge (a suburb of Los Angeles), and will feature the usual Diplomacy tournament (directed by your erstwhile editor), IDA meeting, Diplomacy "seminar" (again managed by your editor, who earnestly solicits suggestions for how this might be made most interesting and useful), and of course tons and tons of other wargaming activity. DipCon '78 is to be held in conjunction with GLASC-III (GLASC = Greater Los Angeles Simulations Convention), which has tournaments and game-playing in a huge variety of things, information and exhibit tables, prizes and trophies, lots of good fellowship, and a general fun experience to offer.

Information on housing and transportation, as well as on specific activities planned, can be obtained by writing to: Russell Fox, 5160 Donna Avenue, Tarzana, California 91356, or to George Phillies, 910 Tenth Street, Apt. B, Santa Monica, California 90403. I hope I'll



...and, if you can, take advantage of a...  
...which on yet will  
...for every such  
...man are to be.

3. The International Diplomacy Association (IDA) was for a long time the only worthwhile Diplomacy organization in North America. Then it fell into a period of confusion and decline, with the result that it and its good works seemed doomed. Now, after much turmoil, there is a fresh start and excellent prospects, so encouraging that DIPLOMACY WORLD feels comfortable once again recommending the group to all readers. Newly-elected officers are: Bob Hartwig, President; David Bunke, Ombudsman; Doug Beyerlein, Treasurer; Jerry Jones, Editor; Konrad Baumeister, Special Projects; Andy Cook, U.S. Projects; Calvin White, Canadian Projects. DIPLOMACY WORLD will, beginning next issue, once again entertain its close relationship with IDA, and the recent IDA proposal to have the Ombudsman write a regular information column for DW is eagerly endorsed.

Membership information is available from Bob Hartwig, 304 Slater Hall, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242, USA. Dues are \$2.00 per year and should be sent to Douglas Beyerlein, 640 College, Menlo Park, California 94025, USA.

4. The current custodian of the Boardman Numbers (those little stylizations differentiating one postal game from another, e.g. 1978BQ) is Calvin White, 1 Turnberry Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6N 1P6. Cal has only been at the job a short while, but he's doing a fine job (as we knew he would) keeping this aspect of the hobby organized and current. Kudos to one of the brighter spots in the hobby.

5. There is an organization (of sorts; I don't really think it has a very big membership) known as GPA - Gamesmasters' Publishers Assn. Operated by W. Elmer Hinton, Jr., 20 Almont St., Nashua, New Hampshire 02060, U.S.A., the group has in the past not been taken very seriously by much of anybody, mainly I suppose because nobody was ever very sure just exactly what GPA was supposed to do, also probably because we were all too busy worrying about IDA. But now, somewhat out of the blue, it turns out we were wrong; GPA is not just a joke. Elmer advises me that GPA is beginning in concrete fashion one of the major and most worthy of its projects: Helping to subsidize the hobby service officers and activists. GPA has just (January) begun its payment of subsidy fees to the Boardman Number Custodian (for regular games) and the Miller Number Custodian (for variants), at the rate of 20¢ U.S. for each number issued. Your average hobby member may well wonder just what good such generosity does anybody; well, friends, it is a big help to all of us. These hobby services are what really keeps the hobby together and functioning

...the big  
...the group,  
...the hobby,  
...the "joke" is, I think we all ought to write Elmer and get in on the humor. Now.

6. For variant games, there is a number system too (as I just mentioned), Miller Numbers. The current custodian is Robert E. Sacks, 4861 Broadway, Apt. 5-V, New York, New York 10034, USA. Contrary to still-flickering rumors, Robert and his Miller Numbers are the only variant labelling authorities in existence; any reference to so-called "variant numbers" is now obsolete. Robert publishes a fanzine called PHOENIX to explicate the activities of his job, and is currently involved in running a variant awards poll. Contact him to obtain further information.

7. A sad and fond farewell to one of the oldest, most reliable and most fascinating postal Diplomacy fanzines ever published: Fred Davis' BUSHWACKER, a variant fanzine which will be closing shop after a few more issues. Fred is not leaving the hobby, but personal pressures force him to retire as an active publisher. Damned shame, that; for many years (6½, in fact), Fred and his magazine have been synonymous with integrity, promptness, fascinating new variant ideas, and general reader interest. Thanks for all you've given us, Fred; and thank goodness you will still be around as a friend and a person to reap your well-deserved laurels.

8. A very new and very attractive magazine has recently plopped into my post-box; okay, all you people screaming about how you can't find game openings, here's a good bet. NON SEQUITUR comes from J. Richard Jarvinen, 330 Madison, Astoria, Oregon 97103, USA. Fees for Diplomacy are \$1.50 plus a \$2 refundable deposit plus postage. A wide variety of other postal board games is available at similar fees. In addition, a goodly amount of reading material is planned, and since the editor is one of the more literate publishers to come our way of late, this is a Very Good Thing. I suggest immediate enquiry.

9. Want a game at a reasonable fee? Want absolute reliability? Want a nice balance of moves and reading matter? Don't object to not much press? Want a place in what is generally considered the very best all-around Diplomacy fanzine in existence? You are urged to get on the lists of CLAW AND FANG, published by Don Horton, 16 Jordan Court, Sacramento, California 95826. Game fees \$3.00 plus subscription (at 6/\$2.00), or a rough average of \$13.00 per full game. Slightly above my maximum as expressed elsewhere in this issue, but in this case I have no qualms; you simply will not lose out

if you get involved here.

10. Still another good newer magazine is THE IMPERIUM, from Rob Markham and John Jacocks. The address is: THE IMPERIUM, 23 Granville Avenue, Danbury, Connecticut 06810, U.S.A. The fees are slightly higher than usual - \$3.00 game fee, \$1.00 refundable deposit, plus sub at \$5.50 for 12 issues - average overall game cost \$16.75. Normally I'd be upset, but there's a good reason here; THE IMPERIUM is a big magazine with a lot of other games going on in its pages, so you ought to be prepared for a great amount of material. At last report there were over one dozen games available to play, at varied fees. THE IMPERIUM seems to have overcome some printing queasiness, and is now an excellent magazine. Drop 'em a line.

11. An aside, which belongs elsewhere but only fits here. When considering signing for a game in a magazine that charges fee plus subscription, you must keep in mind that your sub fees need be paid only once no matter how many games you enter. Thus, for instance, in Item 10 above, if you play just one game of Diplomacy you'll end up shelling out \$16.75 in non-refundable fees, but if you play two games then your per-game cost is down to under \$10.00. (These figures aren't precise, because no two games last the same amount of time, and may not begin at the same time. But they're close.) So don't automatically be put off because one game will cost a bundle; figure out what two games will cost before you chafe.

12. New York is full of absolute lunatics. You knew that, did you? Well, did you know that

#### THE 1977 DIPLOMACY HANDBOOK

If you're a typical Diplomacy player, your view of the hobby is tight, squalid, and self-contained. You worship Diplomacy World because it is offset and has the largest circulation, and is therefore Professional. What you don't realise is that your standards are screwed up; what you see as professionalism is meaningless slickness, and what you dismiss as amateurish--the small circulation zines of the hobby--are the products of hard work and love. The hobby isn't just a place to play Diplomacy; every once in a while, someone produces an article or an issue which is startlingly good--even by "professional" standards.

You need shaking up. You need to take another look at the hobby and what comes out of it. Such an examination is the 77 Diplomacy Handbook, which contains articles on every aspect of the hobby except the game. The Handbook is an official publication of the International Diplomacy Association of North America, and will cost you \$2, \$1.50 if you're an IDA/NA member.

Contact: Greg Costikyan, PO Box 865, Brown University, Providence, RI, 02912

one of the looniest of them prints a magazine lovingly called ZIRKAST, the FREDAWN LEFTIST, and runs regular Diplomacy games therein for \$3.00 plus subscription at 7/\$2.00 (average overall one-game cost \$11.50)? Did you also know that ZIRKAST et al. is full of blithering for the reader's perusal, a mite "clannish" perhaps, but generally intriguing in any case? Did you know that the perpetrator is Benjamin Grossman, 323 Speakman, 3700 Spruce, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104, U.S.A.? If you didn't know these things, you're making a big mistake by not finding them out.

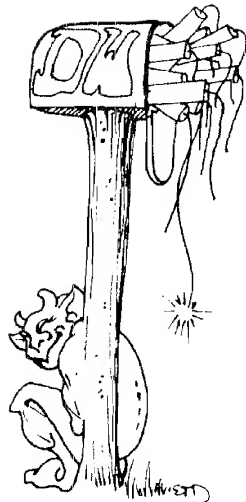
13. DIPLOMACY DIGEST. Mark L. Berch, 492 Naylor Place, Alexandria, Virginia 22304, U.S.A. 10/\$3.50. This has been what is known as a "capsule plug" for a unique and terribly worthy effort, a digest of articles and other reading material of interest to player and publisher alike. There are no games run; the magazine is strictly for the reader, and its mainstay is the reprinted item from other sources. It is doing a very fine job with a basic idea that was much too long in coming. If all that interests you is playing the game, you won't be interested; but then, if that's true, you're likely as not reading something else than this at this very moment. So for the 100% of you who would be interested, get a sub started soonest.

14. LIES, DECEITS AND NEFARIOUS SCHEMES is still another of the excellent new magazines that have cropped up lately. This one comes from Jerry Jones, 1854 Wagner Street, Pasadena, California 91107, and offers games at a \$2.00 fee, \$2.00 refundable deposit (under very narrow conditions) and a sub at \$3.50/10. One free (i.e. no \$2.00 fee) game to members of IDA (see news item 3). Good reading, well-printed, and excellently-managed, and \$12.50 as an average one-game cost isn't bad at all (less if you join IDA, folks!), so get out the pen and paper and start writing....

15. The editor of DIPLOMACY WORLD, Conrad von Metzke, P.O. Box 626, San Diego, California 92112, U.S.A., wishes to hear from publishers interested in taking over two orphan games--one regular, one variant (1885). Earlier private enquiries have gone awry. Please state the financial terms you consider acceptable to you.

16. AGAINST THE ODDS (a hopeful title for a Diplomacy fanzine, eh?) is rather new and handsomely printed; it contains many games (several open) and a brace of reading material on various levels. Fees seem to be about the norm these days: \$2.00 fee plus \$2.00 refundable deposit plus sub (10/\$3.50), an average one-game cost of \$13.50. I do indeed like the looks of this newcomer; write to Craig Reges, 16 W 761 White Plains Road, Bensenville, Illinois 60106 and see if you don't agree. (Yes, friends, the address is exactly as printed!)

## THE MAILBOX FILLETH



Editor,

The reader feedback form you have sent misses the point. DW is not so much better in the kind of material that appears in it in terms of subject. DW is better today because of style. You seem to be asking yourself, "Is this interesting?" when considering copy for the publication. As long as you keep this central concept in mind, your publication will continue to enjoy readership in great numbers.

You should also keep in mind that within the general topic of Diplomacy there are several sub-hobbies. They are like little constituencies and deserve some content in your publication. Most people are not interested in variants, but this does not mean you should not give variant fans good coverage. Variant fans are a sub-community within the hobby; providing good variant information is one way to reach "that market." To a great extent, the same thing is true for Diplomacy politics, and there are others. My suggestion is that you publish a true cross-section of the hobby, including material from all interests.

- Drew McGee

((I appreciate your well-taken points. Let it never be said that minority factions within the hobby are going to be frozen out of DW, no matter how overwhelming the polls. The point is merely to provide coverage of a given facet in reasonable proportion to the number of people interested in that aspect. Variety of styles and subjects is essential, I think, just as long as the minority interests do not overwhelm the majority.))

Editor,

What I want to know is, what is DW trying to

accomplish? What is your philosophy? Are you trying to promote interest, to make more people aware of Diplomacy? Do you try to act as a clearinghouse of Diplomacy information?

I get the feeling that you are trying to please everyone. This heavy burden is likely to result in a hernia.

- Dave White

((I wasn't aware that DW had ever bothered to formulate a philosophy; we've always sort of felt that anything remotely connected with the game might well fit in here, and anything else would be better off elsewhere. Beyond that, I guess you're right; there is no philosophy, we are trying to please everyone, and we do have hernia symptoms.

((Whether formally outlined or not, DW has been, is, and will be trying to accomplish a few things: Stimulation of greater interest in the postal Diplomacy hobby; Service as a central focus for hobby business and information, so that players and publishers will always have a forum and a source of constant news; Exploration of various 'deeper' facets of the game and the hobby than one can get merely from playing; and Development of a 'community' of people with a mutual interest, so that exchange of information, ideas and friendships is enhanced.

((A lot of people seem to think that anything printed in DW is "official," and anything printed elsewhere is not. Baloney. What we produce is a regular, professional magazine providing lots of ideas and lots of information, but very little of it is ever 'absolute' and hopefully never will be. In an admittedly limited way, you might liken DW and Diplomacy to TIME and news; neither is The Word, but both present a cross-section in (hopefully) an interesting and informative manner. I'd say that's about all the philosophy we need, or want.))

Editor,

Why not articles or columns on "Dungeons and Dragons?" On other wargames? On other games in general?

- various people

((There are many excellent wargaming and D&D magazines available; DW is aimed solely at a particular game and the various ramifications thereof. It would be nice to be able to cover everything - your editor would love to spend five or ten pages on classical music, too - but in general, the more one diversifies, the harder it is to maintain standards of quality and usefulness. For people with interests in gaming outside Diplomacy, may I suggest you read the various advertisements in our pages and approach the publishers who are already doing fine jobs with the larger gaming world.))

Editor,

Is Diplomacy by mail some sadistic person's

idea of a joke? If so, I do not find the joke amusing. I purchased a Diplomacy game a year ago...after getting a working knowledge of the game, I looked forward to playing. Based on your "Need a Game?" column, I sent to somebody and waited...and waited...and waited. Nothing. Did I give up? Never! I wrote to someone else. And waited...and waited...and waited....

I am still waiting, and have just received my third issue of DW. I believe I would enjoy playing Diplomacy, but what good is your magazine or the game if you can't play?

- Ross Vandercook

((I have been frankly astounded to learn that many readers were simply not getting any responses to their inquiries based on "Need a Game?" Part of my attempt at resolution is in this issue's novice column article, and a further attempt can be found in "Trumpets and Hautboys." The latter idea, if people will cooperate, seems the best solution to me. But meanwhile, are publishers really failing to reply to enquiries? Would some of you care to comment; in particular, if you do not reply to every inquiry, could you tell us why? Do you want money? Do you solicit players only until a game fills, and then ignore others? Would you be willing to pass along inquiries received after you no longer can use them, to a DW-sponsored clearing house of names?))

Editor,

As a general point of discussion, has anyone ever tried playing Diplomacy with the rule that one is NOT forced to occupy a supply depot when one moves into it? It seems absurd that a player cannot come to an ally's aid directly, because his army will do as much destruction marching through as will the enemy's. This would add a certain amount of realism as well as a lot more room for the effects of trust and guessing one's "ally's" true motives.

- Larry Fitzgerald

((Variants based on equivalent principles have been done, I know that. Any comments from the "regular-board variant" people?))

Editor,

I would like to see more actual game analysis; not just a list of moves, but reasons why Austria turned on Russia this turn. The article "Sooper France" came closest to the type of item I expected to find in your magazine.

Giving only two years of a Demo Game doesn't show much, especially middle static years. I would like to see more space given to Demo Games - and why is it called "Young Turks' Game?"

- Bill Becker

((Two or three years at a time is about all that is possible; you must understand that the

Demonstration Game is not a reprint of an historic event, but an ongoing, contemporary thing. In this issue you'll find three more years of the same game, and next time there'll be more, until the game ends. As you read this, the players are probably into the 1909 moves....

((("Young Turks" because the starting players were all comparative newcomers to our Demonstration Games.))

Editor,

The ability to negotiate, to "diplomacize," if you will, is the heart and soul of this game we all love and hate. It is amazing to me the number of players I have met who DO NOT GRASP THIS! How many players can you think of that send off a bunch of postcards in Spring 1901 saying, "Care to ally with me?" and then shrink aghast when everyone attacks them? In my humble opinion, it is possible to teach new or weak players some of the basics of How To Write a Good Letter!

The article by Nicky Palmer in DW 17 was one of the best Diplomacy-related articles I have ever seen. Much more is needed in this area. I would consider it worth the effort if you could ~~blackmail~~ politely request other noteworthy players to write articles of this type.

- W.C. Newell, Jr.

((Nicky's article really brought down the house; more such are eagerly welcomed here.))

Editor,

Letter column: Mr. Butcher is no doubt a nice chap, but his ideas are wrong. I once thought along his lines, and tried to unify the U.K. with some peoposals, only to get told what I could do with them. I now hold the opposite viewpoint, in that Diplomacy is a hobby 'unified by its diversity' and 'organized by its lack of co-ordination.' It is too small to be run as Mr. Butcher says, and everyone is too independent. Dippy is not like the bridge hobby anyway; they are poles apart.

- Richard Nash

Editor,

The perennial debate about "won't-organization-help-us-get-big-real-soon?" is really getting very tiresome. Mr. Butcher's letter piled the ennui even higher. In general, the arguments in favor of a monolithic organization boil down to three: (1) Organization will help the hobby grow faster; (2) The hobby has grown too fast and needs organization to reduce the chaos; (3) Organization will provide a framework built of sanctioned ratings, etc., in which play of Diplomacy will be more enjoyable.

None of the foregoing has much validity. One should note first that the first two arguments are in a sense contradictory. Of the two, argument (1) seems to me to have less

foundation in reality. Diplomacy fandom may not have as many competitive adherents as chess or bridge, but there are solid reasons for believing that it inherently never will.

Reason (2) I could almost agree with, if we define "reducing chaos" as providing meaningful services to players, gamesmasters, and publishers with a minimum of bull. Unfortunately, it never works out that way. Monolithic organizations have turned into nothing more than vehicles for the egos of a select few, who wind up talking about how "we're doing such a good job" instead of actually doing anything.

This leaves us with reason (3), which to me would seem to apply only to those alluded to earlier with neurotic obsessions about pumping up their egos. If a person wants to play a Diplomacy game, he can drop this magazine right now and sign up in one that has games. And isn't that the core of what the enjoyment is supposed to be about? Is it more fun if we form a monolithic organization and elect officers? Would a monolithically-sanctioned championship tournament or rating system make it more fun? That kind of thing has no meaning at all, and that leads me to the reason why Diplomacy will never follow bridge or chess in professionalism or semi-professionalism.

A fact which everyone seems to ignore is that, unlike bridge or chess, Diplomacy is a multipolar game, not a game of two opposing sides. Moreover, the interaction of sides, unlike chess, leads to regions beyond the actual board. While one can go head to head with someone in chess or a two-player wargame and find out who is the "better" player, the same can't be done with as much precision in Diplomacy. There are a number of factors beyond negotiating skill and facility at duplicity that affect the formation and breaking of alliances, which are the heart of survival in Diplomacy. Among these extraneous factors are: Previous experience (or lack of it) with one or more players in a game; a player's repu-

tation; and pure dumb luck. Also, all the skill in the world means little if the person you're talking to is too unsophisticated to understand your subtleties. In short, while one can argue that the result of a chess game is the result of pure skill more than anything else, the same can't be said with Diplomacy as forcefully. It follows that one cannot make as strong a correspondence between game performance and intrinsic skill, and thus Diplomacy ratings are meaningless. Sure, the top ten to fifteen players in any ratings system are probably good players, but so what? You could probably make the same conclusion based on hearsay. In the end, rating systems are merely agglomerations of fudge factors, signifying nothing.

So if ratings are pretty meaningless, and if game outcome can often depend on factors such as personal dislike, with complete disregard for skill, it seems very unlikely to me that Diplomacy will ever attain the professional or semi-professional status that some like to fantasize about.

- Dick Trtek

Editor,

Is it necessary to become more organized? I ask this, not as a rhetorical question, but as a matter on which I have genuinely not made up my mind. I have had a lot of good fun out of Diplomacy; much of this fun has arisen from the craziness and warmth and unpredictability of the individuals I have come across. I'd hate to see this individualism stifled by bureaucracy and a grim, "let's-stick-to-the-game" mentality. It may be that minimal services are all the hobby needs. If the only way we can become "big time" is to sacrifice the individuality of the hobby, I for one would say, "let's not bother."

- John Leeder

Editor,

The acquisition of your art editor, Ms. Danforth, was a real coup. The presence of her work alone greatly improved DW. Artwork is what gives any publication its touch of class, or lack of it. Ms. Danforth has certainly given DW a touch of class.

- Arturo R. Guajardo

((Agreed....))

Editor,

I am not a postal Diplomacy player, rather a face-to-face player who gets into four or six games per year. As such I find that there is a lack of material concerning application of "strategy and tactics" in Diplomacy in re: face-to-face play. Consider that I know at least five other Diplomacy players who have no idea that your magazine exists. Multiply your total circulation by five and that should

SUPERNOVA! is a science fiction gaming magazine printed by Flying Buffalo Inc. It is published irregularly (2 or 3 times a year), offset-printed, booklet format, and the latest issue was 20 pages long. Subscriptions are 5 issues for \$2. Issue #26 had news of s-f games, survey results, notes about STELLAR CONQUEST from the designer, letters, book reviews, STARSHIP COMBAT variants, part of THE MCGONIGLE CHRONICLE, and ads from subscribers. To subscribe, send check or money order to Flying Buffalo Inc, Box 1467, Scottsdale, AZ 85252. Sample copy 50¢. We accept MasterCard! (To charge anything sold by Flying Buffalo, send us your MasterCard card number and expiration date.)

give you some idea of a potential readership that you're either missing out on or intentionally ignoring. The figure is perhaps higher than that if you consider people who play the game once or twice a year for two or three hours.

- Frederick W. Meyer

((Good point. DW has always been, and has been specifically billed as, a magazine for postal Diplomacy. I'm not really sure that the f-t-f player who only plays a few hours a year would shell out money for a magazine devoted to such a pasttime - why not a magazine dealing with the replacement of burned-out light bulbs in lamps? - but for the more active in-person aficionado, there may well be a market. My first guess is that the solution is, in most instances, to slightly rework the articles in DW to make them applicable to both postal and face-to-face play; in terms of strategy and tactics, at least, the distinctions are minimal. In the present issue, Douglas Mills' article somewhat relates to Mr. Meyer's position. Any comments out there?))

Editor,

For Mr. Butcher's variant suggestions ((in the letter in DW 17)), Diplomacy is among the most expensive boxed boardgames available. To add maps and rules and pieces for variants would put the price out of reach of too many potential players while adding virtually no appeal. I suspect most buyers have heard about the game from someone else, and in such cases a higher price is a greater deterrent than a limitation to seven players.

However, a separate offering of variants is feasible, and the final stages of negotiation for publication of a variant booklet by Avalon-Hill and a British publisher are in progress. The booklet is already finished, and while it doesn't exactly meet Mr. Butcher's suggestions, there is a five-player World War II variant which conforms to present rules except for four neutral armies in civil disorder. And, after all, civil disorder is defined in the rulebook, and units are often left in anarchy in f-t-f games. So I don't understand the objection to garrisoned neutrals. A "novices variant" for five players is most vital, but I doubt that eight- or nine-player, completely standard games are necessary because so few novice groups can find so many players. (In the British diplomacy set will be a flyer advertising the variant booklet which will include a different five-player variant, set in 1792, though with a board too small for play.)

It is extremely difficult, by the way, to design variants for other than seven which are as historically accurate (or inaccurate) as Diplomacy, use only standard rules, and have good play-balance. The only two that I know of are the two mentioned above.

- Lew Pulsipher

# IGC

International Games Club (North American Branch)  
Coordinator: Capt. R.L. Morton, 173 Irving Ave.,  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1Y 1Z6

PURPOSES: To provide reliable, guaranteed game starts in Diplomacy, board wargames, Scrabble and chess; To encourage international contacts in the hobby; To encourage players to fight the dropout plague by joining a friendly club made up of Diplomacy and other game fans whose membership is conditional on staying in their games to the end.

BACKGROUND: The British-based National Games Club has been flourishing since 1973 on these lines, with over 200 Diplomacy games started to date. The North American club, an autonomous non-profit organization, linked to the NGC by joint membership in the IGC, will work to provide an equally good service to the North American hobby.

SERVICES: Diplomacy game openings, to be run in FOL SI FIE, a magazine with over 80 published issues. The game fee is \$2, plus 25¢ per turn (Canadian \$) plus a refundable \$1 deposit; drop-outs forfeit this sum. Other openings are also available; contact Ralph Morton (address above) for details.

MEMBERSHIP: Players must be members of the IGC. To join, copy the 'coupon' below (or clip it if you don't mind destroying the cover of DIPLOMACY WORLD) and send it by air mail to: Gordon Bell, Midtown, Easton, Wigton, Cumbria, United Kingdom. To keep in touch with the international side, we recommend also reading the 40-page off-set NGC magazine, DOLCHSTOSS.

Dear Gordon Bell: I should like to join the IGC and enclose US \$1.75 (or equivalent in any other currency) for the first year's membership fee. I understand that my membership will be terminated if I drop out of two games without any warning. I (do / do not) enclose \$3.50 (or the equivalent) to cover seven months' trial subscription to DOLCHSTOSS. (Notice: DOLCHSTOSS will be sent by surface mail.) My interests include (check): Diplomacy \_\_\_\_\_ chess \_\_\_\_\_ war games \_\_\_\_\_ Scrabble \_\_\_\_\_ other (what?) \_\_\_\_\_

The following is a list of all known publishers, arranged in chronological order according to length of time publishing, who have regular game openings in North America. If interested, send any of them a stamped return envelope and ask for a sample copy of their magazine; that way you'll get an idea of what most interests you. The bracketed figure is the approximate length of time each person has been "in business." An asterisk (\*) denotes a publishing break at least once of three or more months during the total period.

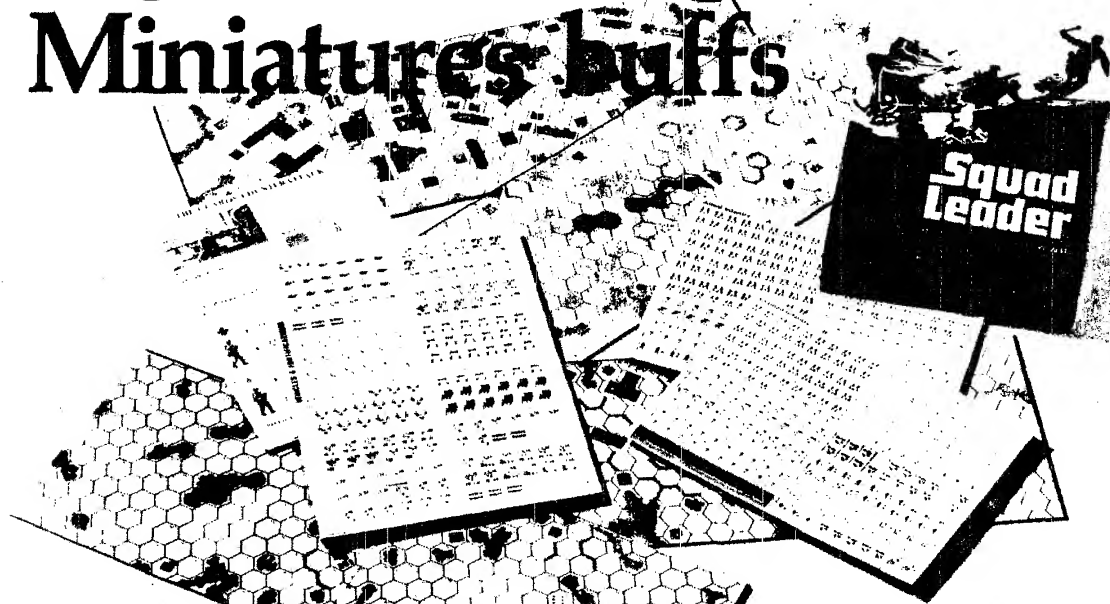
If you find any problems with any of the listings, please let DIPLOMACY WORLD know. While we cannot accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information, or for the reliability of the people, we do try to be careful and will purge any name not properly listed.

# NEED A GAME?

1. John Boardman, 234 E. 19th St., Brooklyn, New York 11226 (14½)
2. Herb Barents, R.R. 4, 1142 S. 96th Ave., Zeeland, Michigan 49464 (6½)
3. Jim Benes, 417 S. Stough, Hinsdale, Illinois 60521 (5½)
4. John Leeder, 1121 5th St. N.W., Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2M 3B6 (5½)
5. Don Horton, 16 Jordan Ct., Sacramento, California 95826 (5)
6. Robert Lipton, 556 Green Place, Woodmere, New York 11598 (4½)
7. John Mirassou, Rt. 2, Box 623-AC, Morgan Hill, California 95037 (4\*)
8. Jim Bumpas, 948 Loraine Ave., Los Altos, California 94022 (4)
9. Gil Neiger, Box 4293, Brown Univ., Providence, Rhode Island 02912 (3½)
10. Randolph Smyth, 249 First Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1S 2G5 (3½)
11. Mike Homeier, 238 N. Bowling Green Way, Los Angeles, California 90049 (3½)
12. Bob Hartwig, 5030 N. 109th St., Longmont, Colorado 80501 (3½)
13. Tony Watson, 201 Minnesota, Las Vegas, Nevada 89107 (3½)
14. Donald Bingle, 5235 S. Greenwood, Apt. 1-N, Chicago, Illinois 60615 (3)
15. David Head, P.O. Box 1231, Huntsville, Ontario, Canada POA 1K0 (3)
16. Laurence Gillespie, 23 Robert Allen Dr., Halifax, No a Scotia, Canada B3M 3G9 (3)
17. Greg Costikyan, 1675 York Ave., New York, New York 10028 (3)
18. Russell Fox, 5160 Donna Ave., Tarzana, California 91356 (3)
19. Roger Oliver, PO Box 452, Denville, New Jersey 07834 (2½)
20. Ben Grossman, 29 E. 9th St., Apt. 9, New York, New York 10003 (2½)
21. Robert Goldman, 200 Old Army Road, Scarsdale, New York 10583 (2½\*)
22. Dennis Agosta, 14 Shadyside Ave., Dumont, New Jersey 07628 (2)
23. Alan Rowland, 52 Eighth Ave., Westwood, New Jersey 07675 (2)
24. Donald Wileman, 98 Sanderling Cresc., Lindsay, Ontario, Canada K9V 4N2 (1½)
25. Dick Trtek, 2728 S.E. Main, Apt. 1, Portland, Oregon 97214 (1)
26. Jim Peters, 5004 N. 68th Drive, Glendale, Arizona 85303 (1)
27. Steve Heinowski, 1630 W. 28th St., Lorain, OH 44052 (½)
28. David Bunke, 5512 Julmar Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio 45238 (½)
29. Robert Markham, 63 North St., Danbury, Connecticut 06810 (½)
30. George Parkanyi, 158-B MacArthur Ave., Apt. 1608, Vanier, Ont., Canada K1L 8C9 (½)
31. Andy Cook, 807 Crescent Dr., Alexandria, Virginia 22302 (½)
32. Thomas Gould, 40 West 77th St., New York, New York 10024 (½)
33. Jerry Jones, 1854 Wagner St., Pasadena, California 91107 (new)
34. Craig Reges, 16 W 761 White Plains Rd., Bensenville, Illinois 60106 (new)
35. J. Richard Jarvinen, 330 Madison, Astoria, Oregon 97103 (new)



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